



POLISH PRESIDENCY **2025-2026**

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE POLISH PRESIDENCY OF
THE COUNCIL OF THE BALTIC SEA STATES**





TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the CBSS 4

Foreword 6

The Polish CBSS Presidency 2025-2026 8

Programme & priorities 8

An enhanced security focus for the CBSS 10

Key achievements under the Polish Presidency in the CBSS expert cooperation 12

CBSS Ministerial Session 2026 14

Safe & Secure Region 16

Civil security 18

Anti-trafficking in human beings 20

Child protection 22

Sustainable & Prosperous Region 24

Sustainable maritime economy 26

Climate dialogue 27

Regional Identity 28

Youth 30

Culture 32

Education 33

Back Pages 34

Project Support Facility 36

The CBSS through the lens 38

EUSBSR Annual Fora 2025 & 2026 43

Committee of Senior Officials 2025-2026 44

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ABOUT THE CBSS

UNITING LIKE-MINDED STATES FOR A STRONGER, SAFER AND RESILIENT BALTIC SEA REGION

Established in 1992 by the Foreign Ministers of the Baltic Sea Region countries, the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) is an intergovernmental organisation that facilitates political dialogue and practical cooperation among its members.

Comprising ten democratic and like-minded states in the Baltic Sea Region and the European Union, the CBSS has, since its inception, addressed transboundary and cross-sectoral issues identified as priorities by its members, adapting its work to changing regional circumstances.

Cooperation within the CBSS is structured around three long-term priorities: Safe & Secure Region, Sustainable & Prosperous Region, and Regional Identity.

In response to the changed geopolitical environment following Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the CBSS has increased its focus on regional security and resilience.

The work of the CBSS is carried out through expert groups, networks, projects and other initiatives, including in cooperation with regional and international organisations. The CBSS Secretariat is based in Stockholm, Sweden.

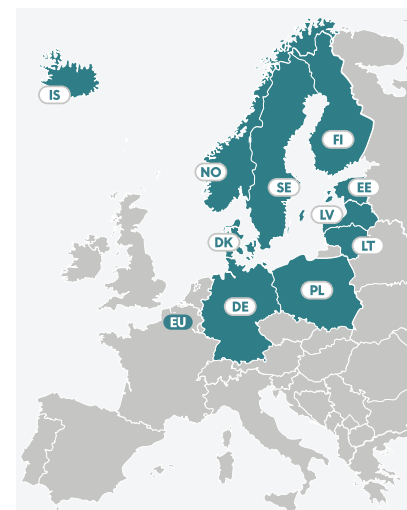
The Presidency of the CBSS rotates annually among its Member States, from 1 July to 30 June. During its term, the Presidency coordinates the organisation's activities, sets priorities and facilitates cooperation among Member States. Poland held the CBSS Presidency from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026.

Three Long-Term Priorities

The CBSS's practical cooperation is guided by three long-term priorities: Safe & Secure Region, Sustainable & Prosperous Region, and Regional Identity. Current efforts notably focus on societal resilience, child protection, anti-trafficking in human beings, sustainable maritime economy, and youth engagement, all aimed at addressing the region's geopolitical challenges and fostering a strong, cooperative Baltic Sea Region.

CBSS Members

Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Sweden, and the European Union.



Pedestrian Magdalena Abakanowicz bridge over the Vistula river in Warsaw.

FOREWORD

by Katarzyna Barcikowska,
Chair of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)
under the Polish CBSS Presidency 2025-2026

POLAND took over the presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States at a very challenging time. Russia intensified its hybrid and disinformation activities in the region. Every month we were exposed to unprecedented threats. The main task of the Polish Presidency – defined in the Vihula Declaration (May 2025) – was to steer the Council's work towards a greater focus on security-related cooperation. Our priority was also to strengthen the political pillar of the organisation.

The discussions among the CBSS Members proved that we are like-minded, looking in the same direction, also regarding the future role of the organisation. The Sopot Declaration, adopted by all CBSS countries and the European Union during the CBSS Ministerial Session, captured that spirit and delivered a strong political message on regional security.

Thanks to the strong commitment of Polish ministries, institutions, and diplomatic missions, the CBSS's visibility significantly increased. Over 100 events were organised, with a strong focus on cooperation in the resilience-building area. Three meetings of the CBSS foreign ministers and the meeting of CBSS Political Directors gave the organisation an unprecedented boost.

The Polish Presidency highly appreciated the support of all partners in our efforts to strengthen the CBSS as a useful forum for political and expert discussion on crucial security-related issues. We would like to extend our special thanks to the preceding Estonian and the following Icelandic Presidencies, as well as to the CBSS Secretariat. We are committed to continuing to work together in the Poland-Iceland-Sweden CBSS Trio.



◀
Katarzyna Barcikowska
CSO Chair,
Head of the Baltic Multilateral Unit,
European Policy Department,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland.

▶
Radosław Sikorski
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, and the CBSS's Chair under the Polish Presidency.



THE POLISH CBSS PRESIDENCY 2025-2026 PROGRAMME & PRIORITIES

BUILDING ON THE CBSS long-term priorities, the valuable expertise of the working bodies and the achievements of preceding Presidencies, Poland focused on resilience-building and dialogue on crucial challenges: the protection of critical infrastructure, countering the shadow fleet and resilience to GNSS disruptions. The report by the Polish Institute of International Affairs, “White Paper on Russian Acts of Sabotage and Subversion against Members of the Council of the Baltic Sea States”, became a basis for strategic discussion not only in the Baltic Sea Region but also across the EU. New impetus was given to the work of the organisation by establishing a new format for meetings of legal advisers.

As a result, the role and visibility of the CBSS increased. It is worth mentioning, among other examples, the ministerial side event at the Munich Security

Conference, co-organised by the Presidency and the CBSS Secretariat. Poland also supported active involvement of young people in the regional debate, notably by hosting the CBSS Youth Ministerial. The cooperation with the Observer States was also deepened through a new formula of a common seminar.

During the reform process, areas of added value for future cooperation were identified: resilience-building, civil security, cooperation with the private sector on the protection of critical infrastructure, countering foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) and enhanced cooperation with Observer States. To facilitate the process, a report by the Polish think tank Centre for Eastern Studies, “Security Cooperation Formats in the Baltic Sea Region: Recommendations for the Council of the Baltic Sea States”, was prepared in cooperation with all CBSS members.



AN ENHANCED SECURITY FOCUS FOR THE CBSS

IN THE VIHULA DECLARATION, adopted in May 2025 at the transition from the Estonian to the Polish Presidency, the CBSS Foreign Ministers agreed to “refocus the CBSS in order to effectively meet the challenges of the new security environment”, marking a strategic shift towards integrating security and resilience more systematically across the Council’s work.

In line with this new direction, under the Polish Presidency 2025–2026, the CBSS expanded its agenda and political dialogue on emerging security challenges, including the protection of critical infrastructure, countering Russia’s shadow fleet, resilience to disruptions of global navigation satellite system (GNSS), foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), and broader resilience-building.

At the same time, existing areas of cooperation under the CBSS’s long-term priorities were reoriented to reflect the evolving security environment. For example, the CBSS’s work on trafficking in human beings addressed the instrumentalisation of migration and irregular migration pressure as hybrid threats, while

the CBSS Civil Protection Network focused on crisis preparedness, including large-scale evacuations, civil-military cooperation and whole-of-society resilience.

To support this strategic reorientation under the Polish Presidency, the CBSS launched new formats for political dialogue and security cooperation. These included a dedicated CBSS security seminar and new meetings of Political Directors and Legal Advisers from the CBSS Ministries of Foreign Affairs, alongside an increased presence at international security events, including the Warsaw Security Forum and the Munich Security Conference (MSC).

Under the Polish Presidency, the Council set a firm course for its security reorientation, contributing to better equipping the Baltic Sea Region to address the implications of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. In the Sopot Declaration of May 2026, the CBSS Foreign Ministers reinforced this direction, calling for closer regional cooperation to strengthen security and resilience and for “continued decisive steps to address activities that threaten security in the Baltic Sea Region”.

Selected security-themed events 2025-2026

CBSS Security Seminar, Stockholm, 19 November 2025: The CBSS Secretariat hosted ambassadors and diplomats of CBSS Member and Observer States for a seminar on hybrid threats and emerging security challenges, including Russia’s shadow fleet, critical underwater infrastructure, GNSS interference and disinformation.

Council of the Baltic Sea States Meeting, 8 December 2025: CBSS Foreign Ministers, joined by EU High Representative Kaja Kallas, met online to address regional security, including efforts to end Russia’s war against Ukraine, the EU’s work on a reparations loan for Ukraine and the US National Security Strategy.

CBSS Political Directors Meeting, Warsaw, 15 January 2026: The Political Directors of the CBSS Ministries of Foreign Affairs addressed sanctions against Russia, continued support for Ukraine, as well as strengthening of security-related cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region in

response to the growing hybrid threats, including Russia’s shadow fleet and attacks on critical subsea infrastructure.

Munich Security Conference 2026, Munich, 15 February 2026: The Polish Presidency and CBSS Secretariat co-hosted a side-event on hybrid threats. Speakers included the Foreign Ministers of Poland, Iceland and Norway as well as Estonia’s Undersecretary for Political Affairs.

Informal Ministerial Meeting of the CBSS, Warsaw, 4 March 2026: CBSS Foreign Ministers and high-level representatives, together with EU High Representative Kaja Kallas, met at the invitation of Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski to address regional security, Ukraine, preparations for the NATO Summit in Ankara and situation at the Middle East.

CBSS Legal Advisers Meetings — Strasbourg, 20 March 2026; Stockholm, 6 May 2026; and online,

16 June 2026: The Legal Advisers of the CBSS Ministries of Foreign Affairs addressed regional security matters.

CBSS Ministerial Session, Sopot, 28-29 May 2026: Marking the end of the Polish CBSS Presidency, the Ministerial Session focused on regional security, including hybrid threats, the shadow fleet and critical undersea infrastructure, concretising the CBSS’s new security direction and strengthening the Council’s political pillar. All Ministers and the EU HR/VP adopted also the CBSS Sopot Declaration on security in the Baltic Sea Region and support for Ukraine. Alongside the Ministerial Session, the Presidency organised the TTX ORKAN 26 exercise in Gdynia. Representatives of the CBSS Member States worked on a coordinated response to threats posed by the shadow fleet, infrastructure sabotage and disinformation in the Baltic Sea Region. During the final phase, the capabilities of the Polish Special Forces were demonstrated.



As part of the CBSS Ministerial Session 2026, CBSS Ministers attended a demonstration of the capabilities of the Polish Special Forces in responding to the hijacking of a passenger ferry.

OVERVIEW OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER THE POLISH PRESIDENCY IN THE CBSS EXPERT COOPERATION

Civil Protection Network (CPN): Enhancing Preparedness in the Baltic Sea Region

Particular attention was devoted to Host Nation Support, mass evacuation planning and civil-military cooperation, acknowledging the need for effective coordination mechanisms capable of supporting both civil protection operations and broader security requirements.

The Polish Presidency also promoted a broader approach to the resilience-building process, extending beyond institutional capacities alone. During multiple events, stakeholders explored the role of volunteers, local communities, academia, youth organisations and local authorities in strengthening preparedness and public trust. Initiatives such as the Baltic Excellence Programme and activities involving Youth Fire Brigades demonstrated the value of investing in future generations, inclusiveness and societal engagement as essential components of resilience-building.

Strengthened cooperation in the Task Force Against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB)

The Polish Presidency focused on intensifying inter-institutional and international cooperation to strengthen effective mechanisms for identifying and protecting victims, combatting trafficking for forced labour, safeguarding children, and enhancing the resilience of Baltic Sea Region countries to hybrid threats, including the challenges posed by the instrumentalisation of migration by Russia and Belarus.

Expert Group on Children at Risk (CAR): unaccompanied children, children with refugee experience, foreign minors and foster care

CAR conducted structured consultations to identify regional priorities and interests in engagement under the 2025–2030 Strategy – the findings pointed to prevention and early intervention as the main priority area and to unanimous support for exchange of practice and experience between Member States as the strongest form of EG CAR added value.

Joint meeting of experts from the TF-THB and CAR in October 2025

The event focused on the impact of armed conflicts, border crises, and forced migration on trafficking in human beings. Particular attention was devoted to the protection of children and young people, victim identification mechanisms, and trauma-informed approaches.

Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy (EGSME): green shipping corridors, marine digital twin and unexploded ordnance and munition dumped in the Baltic Sea

EGSME continued the work of previous Presidencies, focusing on the green shipping corridors in the region as well as on the digital twin of the Baltic Sea. The Polish Presidency has launched a discussion on unexploded ordnance dumped in the Baltic Sea within the group.

Baltic Region Heritage Committee (BRHC)

The Polish Presidency focused on the importance of documentation and methods of collecting and sharing data on tangible and intangible heritage as fundamental and critical activities for its management and security. Documentation and data sharing were emphasized as fundamental tools for effective heritage protection, crisis preparedness, and cross-sectoral cooperation. The need to pursue the initiative on strengthening regional cooperation on preparedness to protect cultural heritage in times of crisis and armed conflict was identified.

The CBSS Ministers during the Informal Ministerial Meeting of the CBSS, Warsaw, 4 March 2026.



CBSS MINISTERIAL SESSION 2026

With security and resilience high on the agenda, CBSS Foreign Ministers and high-level representatives met in Sopot, Poland, on 28–29 May 2026 for the 23rd Ministerial Session of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

In the Sopot Declaration, the ministers reaffirmed their strong support for Ukraine, condemned Russia's war of aggression and identified Russia as the most significant direct and long-term threat to Euro-Atlantic security. They called for stronger regional responses to hybrid threats, including cyberattacks, sabotage, election interference, instrumentalisation of migration and disruptions to navigation systems.

The ministers also highlighted the environmental, economic and security risks posed by Russia's shadow fleet and called for stronger cooperation to protect critical undersea infrastructure.

The Declaration reaffirmed the CBSS's role as a platform for political dialogue and cooperation on regional security, with continued focus on resilience, civil preparedness, hybrid threats and foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI).

The ministers also acknowledged the contribution of young people to regional decision-making, taking note of the Youth Ministerial held in Warsaw in April 2026.

The Sopot meeting concluded Poland's CBSS Presidency, which strengthened the organisation's political pillar through an increased focus on regional security.



Concrete cooperation should promote [CBSS] Member States resilience and facilitate coordinated response to current challenges, including hybrid threats [...].

▲ Extract from the Sopot Declaration, adopted during the CBSS Ministerial Session 2026

[1] CBSS Ministers and high-level representatives attending a live demonstration of Polish Special Forces' capabilities in countering maritime hybrid threats in Gdynia, as part of the CBSS Ministerial Session 2026.

[2] CBSS Ministers and high-level representatives posing with the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum (BSRYF) representatives.

[3] **Radosław Sikorski**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, addressing the media during the CBSS Ministerial Session 2026.



SAFE & SECURE REGION



**CIVIL
SECURITY**



**ANTI-
TRAFFICKING**



**CHILDREN
AT RISK**

Under the Safe & Secure Region long-term priority, the CBSS works to strengthen security and societal resilience across the Baltic Sea Region. In response to the changing security environment, cooperation increasingly focuses on enhancing preparedness, addressing emerging and cross-border risks, and building resilient societies and communities.

The work under this priority is mainly carried out by the CBSS Civil Protection Network and two specialised groups focusing on countering trafficking in human beings and child protection.

The CBSS Civil Protection Network strengthens regional cooperation on preparedness and response to emergencies and crises, with an increasing focus on whole-of-society resilience.

The CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings works to prevent and counter human trafficking in the region and supports Member States by facilitating cooperation and the exchange of experience and good practices.

The CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk works to protect children and strengthen their rights across the region, including by sharing experience and good practices to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against children.



Sunset over a windmill-shaped lighthouse near Świnoujście, Poland.

CIVIL SECURITY

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Under the Polish Presidency, the CBSS Civil Protection Network (CPN) and EUSBSR Policy Area Secure focused on strengthening regional preparedness, with particular emphasis on Host Nation Support, macro-regional evacuation planning, civil-military cooperation, youth and volunteers, psychological resilience, and the protection of cultural heritage. The Presidency provided a platform for Member States to consolidate their views, identify shared gaps and define practical areas for further cooperation.

Key achievements included the continued development of public-civil cooperation through the CREWS and RiA-ENGAGE projects, including closer links with Ukraine and exchanges on its experience of community resilience and civil protection in wartime. The CBSS also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Lviv State University of Life Safety. CBSS BSR-NOVA continued to serve as a regional platform for cooperation between authorities and volunteer organisations.

The CBSS Secretariat also supported work on individual preparedness through the Baltic Individual Crisis Preparedness Barometer, which now covers all CBSS Member States. Discussions under the Polish Presidency identified concrete follow-up needs, including practical guidance and training, clearer procedures, mapping of existing approaches and possible new working groups, providing a basis for continued regional cooperation on societal security and preparedness.

PROJECT UPDATES

Running

To support public-civil cooperation in the region, the CBSS continues its work in **CREWS – Activating Citizens to Participate in Disaster Relief Efforts**, funded by Interreg Baltic Sea Region. CREWS aims to strengthen disaster risk reduction capacities across the Baltic Sea Region. A cooperation model for public authorities and civil society in disaster management and a training programme for authorities and volunteers are being developed and tested through pilot exercises covering different scenarios, including floods, snowstorms, electricity blackouts and military attacks.

MUNI-RISK and **MUNIMAP** are closely linked projects addressing the risks posed by submerged munitions in the Baltic Sea and supporting risk assessment, decision-making and policy coordination. The CBSS contributes by connecting technical and scientific work with policy processes, stakeholder engagement and regional cooperation structures. During the Polish Presidency, a policy stakeholder seminar was held at the CBSS Secretariat in Stockholm, with the support of the Presidency. Representatives of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials, Member States’ ministries, Observer State embassies, regional organisations and EU institutions were briefed by scientists on the current state of research on submerged munitions, including existing knowledge and uncertainties and the need for closer dialogue between researchers, authorities and policy-makers. A first policy brief was also circulated to CBSS Member and Observer States and HELCOM members to support a shared understanding and further policy dialogue.

Launched

The **RiA-ENGAGE – Resilience in Action: Advancing Disaster Preparedness through Civil Society Engagement** project started on 1 September 2025. Funded by the Swedish Institute, the project complements CREWS by extending work on disaster risk reduction and public-civil cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region to cooperation with Ukraine. It supports collaboration between public authorities and civil society and the exchange of experience on community preparedness and resilience.

Completed

Concluding in February 2026, the **Razom** project brought together partners from Ukraine and the Baltic Sea Region to strengthen societal security education and cooperation through shared learning, practical training and policy-oriented exchange.

KEY EVENTS

CPN DG Meeting: The 24th Meeting of Directors General for Civil Protection, held in Gniew, Poland, brought together senior civil protection representatives to address Host Nation Support, macro-regional evacuation preparedness, civil-military cooperation, societal partnerships, the role of volunteers, psychological resilience and lessons from Ukraine.

RiA-ENGAGE study visit: The RiA-ENGAGE study visit in Sweden brought together project partners and invited experts from the Baltic Sea Region and Ukraine to examine practical models of cooperation between local authorities, volunteers and civil society in crisis preparedness and response.

Baltic Excellence Programme: The Baltic Excellence Programme in Warsaw provided training and exchange for civil protection professionals, focusing on leadership, cross-sectoral cooperation, crisis communication, digital literacy, psychological resilience and the use of AI in crisis contexts.

Stockholm seminar on submerged munitions in the Baltic Sea: Held under the Polish Presidency, the seminar connected the work of MUNI-RISK and MUNIMAP with policy stakeholders, providing an overview of the current state of research, knowledge gaps and areas for continued regional cooperation on sea-dumped munitions.

Science, policy and practice roundtable: The Stockholm roundtable on science, policy and practice for societal security brought together researchers, representatives of the Swedish Civil Defence and Resilience Agency (MCF) and the CBSS Civil Security team to consider how research can better support authorities in addressing complex, cross-border and hybrid threats in the Baltic Sea Region.

Munich Security Conference participation: At the Munich Security Conference 2026, the Polish CBSS Presidency and the CBSS Secretariat jointly hosted a high-level side event on countering hybrid threats in the Baltic Sea Region, including the protection of critical infrastructure, the shadow fleet and broader regional security challenges.



The CBSS & civil security

The CBSS supports cooperation among Baltic Sea Region countries to strengthen preparedness, resilience and crisis management. Its work is carried out mainly through the Civil Protection Network and EUSBSR Policy Area Secure, which bring together national authorities and experts to exchange knowledge, identify shared challenges and develop joint responses. With the support of the CBSS Secretariat, these networks provide continuity between CBSS Presidencies, connect civil security professionals across sectors, and support joint projects and initiatives responding to shared regional needs.

In the civil security policy area, the CBSS focuses on building trust and practical cooperation across borders and sectors. It supports common regional approaches to emerging risks and challenges, including societal resilience, civil-military cooperation, public-civil cooperation and preparedness for large-scale crises. It also strengthens cooperation with civil society and volunteers, including young people, and draws on lessons from Ukraine’s experience.

ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Polish Presidency of the TF-THB focused on three priority areas: the exploitation of minors, regional cooperation and forced labour. Three TF-THB meetings held during the Presidency addressed these areas from different perspectives, with contributions from ministries, law enforcement, academia, NGOs and other stakeholders.

The TF-THB also carried out knowledge-sharing and capacity-building activities, with particular attention to law enforcement. These included the publication of an Investigation Protocol for law enforcement officers, an international forum on human trafficking as organised crime, and a seminar on the instrumentalisation of migration as a hybrid threat. The activities linked anti-trafficking work more closely with combatting organised crime and wider regional security considerations.

The TF-THB also continued to promote the CBSS Handbook for Embassies and Diplomatic Missions on How to Assist and Protect Victims of Human Trafficking. A workshop for diplomatic and consular personnel in Warsaw supported exchange on preventing trafficking, recognising situations of exploitation encountered in their work, and helping victims access appropriate support.

PROJECT UPDATES

PEX-BSR II and PEX-BSR III (2025-2026)

The PEX-BSR project, funded by the Government Offices of Sweden, aims to address the root causes of human trafficking, its security implications, and its links to organised crime. During the Polish Presidency, project activities focused on building the capacity of law enforcement officers in the Baltic Sea Region and Ukraine to investigate human trafficking. Key outputs included an international conference on human trafficking as an organised crime and regional security challenge, the publication of an Investigation Protocol for law enforcement agencies, and the ongoing development of an annex to the Protocol on financial investigations and cryptocurrencies.

KEY EVENTS

Workshop for diplomatic and consular personnel, Warsaw, 8 October 2025

Convened by the Polish Ministry of Interior and Administration under the Polish Presidency of the CBSS, this event aimed to sensitise diplomatic and consular personnel to identifying and handling cases of human trafficking. Participants learned how they can contribute to combatting human trafficking and exchanged experiences on cases and trends they have observed in the field. The session was part of the dissemination activities for CBSS Handbook for Embassies and Diplomatic Missions on How to Assist and Protect Victims of Human Trafficking.

European Forum Against Trafficking in Human Beings – Countering Organised Crime and Protecting Victims (THBxOC 2025), Stockholm, 3-4 December 2025

Organised jointly by the TF-THB and Europol, the THBxOC 2025 Forum gathered over 250 participants from law enforcement agencies, ministries, state authorities, and international organisations across the Baltic Sea Region and Europe to discuss human trafficking as an evolving organised crime threat. Keynote speeches, panel discussions, and interactive workshops highlighted how trafficking networks adapt quickly, how conflict and geopolitical instability – including Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine – exacerbate vulnerabilities, and why a coordinated transnational approach is necessary to intercept organised crime groups and protect victims.

Expert seminar on the instrumentalisation of migration, Warsaw, 17 April 2026

This seminar, organised by the CBSS and the Polish Ministry of the Interior and Administration, considered the instrumentalisation of migration by Belarus and Russia. The event brought together representatives from ministries of the interior, justice, and foreign affairs, as well as border authorities and academia. Participants examined the intersections between national security, migrant smuggling, and human trafficking, and highlighted the importance of robust legal frameworks and concerted national and regional responses to this hybrid threat. The findings of the expert seminar resulted in a policy brief published by the Secretariat in cooperation with the Polish Ministry of Interior and Administration – on the topic of instrumentalisation of migration as a hybrid threat.

Financial investigations and cryptocurrencies workshop, The Hague, 14-15 April 2026

This workshop for financial investigators from law enforcement agencies across the Baltic Sea Region and Ukraine addressed financial investigations and cryptocurrencies in the context of human trafficking and organised crime. The event was supported by Europol, and participants had the opportunity to discuss best practices and investigative challenges with Europol’s experts. Insights from the workshop will be used to develop an annex to the CBSS Investigation Protocol on financial investigations and cryptocurrencies.

Side event at the Conference of the OSCE Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons, Vienna, 20 April 2026

The side event, organised by the CBSS and the Council of Europe, examined the identification and non-punishment of victims of human trafficking in complex cases. Speakers explored issues including the identification of victims in prisons, benefit fraud schemes, and challenges in the consistent implementation of the non-punishment principle.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

Instrumentalisation of Migration in the Baltic Sea Region – A Hybrid Threat at the Intersection of National Security and Human Rights

This policy brief, published by the CBSS and the Ministry of the Interior and Administration of Poland, examines the instrumentalisation of migration by Belarus and Russia as part of a broader spectrum of hybrid threats facing the Baltic Sea Region. It highlights how vulnerable people seeking safety have been deliberately exploited to exert political pressure on neighbouring states and the European Union, creating complex challenges at the intersection of security, migration governance, and human rights.

Investigating Trafficking in Human Beings: An Investigation Protocol for Law Enforcement in the Baltic Sea Region

The Investigation Protocol is a practical guideline for law enforcement agencies, highlighting the crucial steps and investigation techniques required to effectively investigate human trafficking as an organised crime. The publication is the first one of its kind covering an

entire European region. It was developed in cooperation with the Police Authorities and Prosecution Authorities of Denmark, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Sweden, and Ukraine, along with Frontex and, in particular, Europol.

Trafficking in Human Beings for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation in the Baltic Sea Region

This report analyses trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation in the Baltic Sea Region (2020–2024), highlighting the vulnerability of marginalised groups, evolving trafficking methods and online arenas, national and regional responses, and good practices among CBSS Member States. It pays particular attention to youth, LGBTQIA+ victims, and demand reduction initiatives.



The CBSS & anti-trafficking in human beings

Trafficking in human beings remains a serious organised crime threat facing the Baltic Sea Region. Human trafficking networks violate the human rights of victims, undermine public safety, erode the rule of law, and threaten regional stability. In response, the CBSS Task Force Against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) leads regional anti-trafficking efforts. The TF-THB’s activities include coordinating national responses, implementing capacity-building activities, and facilitating information exchange. Through this work, the TF-THB aims to disrupt human trafficking networks, promote robust victim support systems, and ultimately advance security and resilience across the Baltic Sea Region.

CHILDREN AT RISK

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Polish Presidency focused its priorities on unaccompanied children, children with refugee experience, foreign minors and foster care, and was the first Presidency to operate under the new EG CAR Mandate and Regional Strategy 2025–2030. Four Expert Group meetings were held: in Warsaw (October 2025), online (November 2025), in Wrocław (March 2026) and online (May 2026), alongside two Trio meetings.

The Wrocław meeting focused on children with refugee experience, with Member States sharing national approaches to supporting displaced children, including those at the EU’s external border. A joint meeting with the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) was held in Warsaw in October 2025. The programme included study visits in Łódź to a foster family and small group homes caring for Ukrainian children, as well as to the “Lighthouse” centre run by the NGO Foundation DOBROdzieje się.

A Member State consultation on regional priorities under the new Strategy, presented in May 2026, identified prevention and early intervention as the main priority area and showed unanimous support for the exchange of practices as a key function of EG CAR.

The Registry of Practices was updated with the TeamUp methodology, and the Expert Group decided to consolidate its communications under the main CBSS website and channels.

PROJECT UPDATES

PROMISE Soteria ended in September 2025. It was the final project in the PROMISE series, which supported the development of Barnahus and multidisciplinary services for child victims and witnesses of violence across Europe. The Barnahus Quality Standard on Child Protection was released and disseminated in July 2025 as an output of the project, providing guidance for establishing integrated services for child victims and witnesses of violence.

PROMISE Elpis ended during the Polish Presidency, on 31 July 2025. Co-funded by the EU Internal Security Fund, the project focused on adapting Barnahus processes to cases of online child sexual violence. It produced a range of resources for professionals working with affected children, including law enforcement, health professionals, child protection services and therapists. Outputs included the Toolkit for Standard 5: Interagency Case Management and the TF-CBT Enhancement for Victims of Online Child Sexual Abuse, published in March 2025.

The CAR Unit was invited to participate as a partner in two project proposals submitted under the EU Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) “**Knowledge for Action in Prevention and Preparedness**” (KAPP) call. Both proposals focus on strengthening children’s safety, with one addressing child-centred preparedness and the other resilient school environments.

KEY EVENTS

EG CAR meeting and joint meeting with TF-THB, 9–10 October 2025, Warsaw. The Polish Presidency hosted a joint meeting with the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings on responses to trafficking and exploitation affecting children in crisis and migration contexts. The programme included study visits in Łódź to a foster family caring for Ukrainian children and to the “Lighthouse” centre run by the NGO Foundation DOBROdzieje się.

EG CAR meeting, 18 November 2025, online.

EG CAR meeting on children with refugee experience, 12–13 March 2026, Wrocław. A panel discussion with representatives from Lithuania, Norway and Sweden was followed by a tour de table in which all Member States shared updates on developments, good practices and challenges in the protection of refugee children.

EG CAR meeting on trauma-informed care, 27 May 2026, online. The meeting focused on trauma-informed psychosocial and psychological support for displaced and crisis-affected children, with presentations on the TeamUp methodology and systemic psychological intervention for war trauma. Findings from the Member State consultation were also presented.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

Barnahus Quality Standard on Child Protection (July 2025). Released as a final output of the PROMISE Soteria project, the standard provides guidance for establishing integrated services for child victims and witnesses of violence.



The CBSS & child protection

The CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk (EG CAR) promotes children’s rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and strengthens national child protection systems across the Baltic Sea Region through regional dialogue and practical cooperation. It operates under the CBSS long-term priority Safe & Secure Region. The Expert Group consists of senior officials from the ten CBSS Member States. Its 2025–2030 Strategy places regional exchange on children at risk of harm at the core of its work, alongside four thematic areas: multidisciplinary services for child victims and witnesses of violence, non-violent childhoods, prevention of sexual violence, and inclusion and equity.

SUSTAINABLE & PROSPEROUS REGION



SUSTAINABLE
MARITIME
ECONOMY

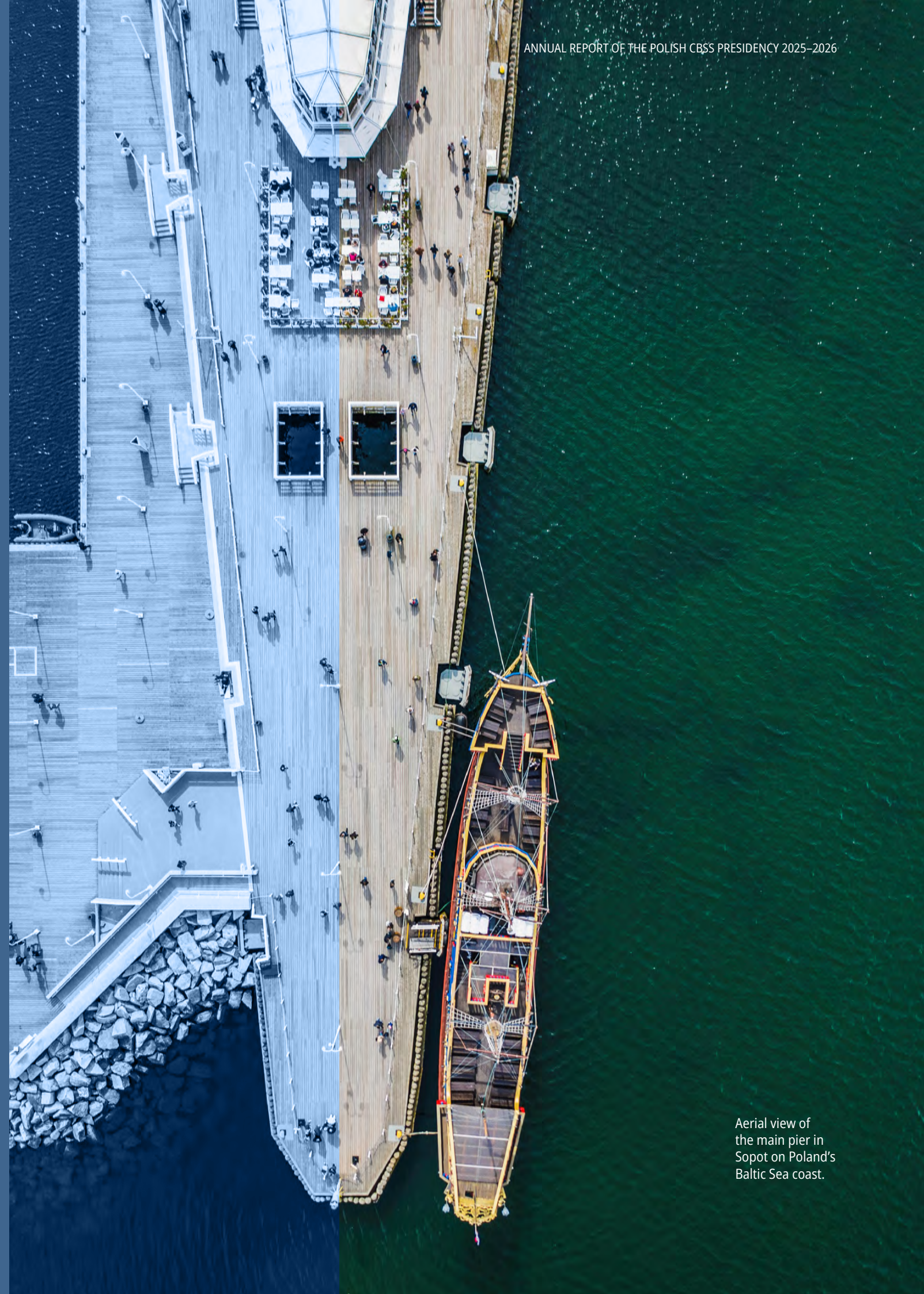


CLIMATE
DIALOGUE

Under the Sustainable & Prosperous Region long-term priority, the CBSS works to balance the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development in the Baltic Sea Region. The work currently focuses mainly on developing a sustainable and resilient maritime economy, strengthening societal resilience to the effects of climate change and addressing submerged munitions in the Baltic Sea.

The CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy (EGSME) brings together national experts responsible for maritime issues to exchange knowledge and develop shared approaches to a sustainable and resilient maritime economy in the Baltic Sea Region.

Climate action focuses on strengthening resilience and preparedness for the impacts of climate change, particularly at the local level. Through regional cooperation and projects such as ClimaResponse, the CBSS supports municipalities in developing practical tools and approaches for climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction and preparedness.



Aerial view of
the main pier in
Sopot on Poland's
Baltic Sea coast.

SUSTAINABLE MARITIME ECONOMY

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Polish Presidency focused the work of the Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy (EGSME) on three areas: unexploded ordnance (UXO) and submerged munitions in the Baltic Sea, green shipping corridors, and maritime digital twins.

Introducing UXO and submerged munitions as a new topic for the Expert Group, the Presidency hosted an online meeting on 9 December 2025. Contributions drawing on national, regional and European experience highlighted the scale and complexity of the issue, as well as the need for cross-border exchange of expertise and coordinated approaches.

The Polish Presidency also continued work on green shipping corridors and the digital twin of the Baltic Sea. At a meeting hosted by the Presidency in Gdańsk on 9 June 2026, presentations and discussions covered developments in green shipping practices, data gathering and modelling, including the role of ports in these areas. The meeting was followed by a study visit to the Baltic Hub Container Terminal.

KEY EVENTS

Meeting on the topic of unexploded ordnance (UXO): During this first ESGME meeting under the Polish Presidency on 9 December 2025, experts from CBSS Member States and the EU considered the various challenges posed by UXO in the Baltic Sea, noting its implications for regional safety, environmental protection and economic activity.

Seminar on green shipping corridors and the maritime digital twin: During this second ESGME meeting under the Polish Presidency on 9 June 2026 in Gdańsk, Poland, EGSME members and guest speakers discussed ongoing work on ports and projects on progressing green shipping corridors and a maritime digital twin in the Baltic Sea.



The CBSS & sustainable maritime economy

The long-term priority Sustainable & Prosperous Region aims to maintain a balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development in the Baltic Sea Region. Through the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy (EGSME), national experts responsible for maritime issues exchange knowledge and consider shared challenges and approaches to developing a sustainable and resilient maritime economy in the Baltic Sea Region.

CLIMATE DIALOGUE

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

During the Polish Presidency, the CBSS-led project **ClimaResponse – Responsive Local Action for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction**, funded by Interreg Baltic Sea Region, developed tools and guidance for local climate resilience planning. These include a step-by-step planning model, Terms of Reference and a model for municipal Cross-Sectoral Climate Resilience Working Groups (CRWGs), as well as guidance on inclusive climate resilience planning. The resources were developed through a collaborative process involving municipalities, researchers and regional organisations across the Baltic Sea Region.

Through workshops, consultations, surveys and stakeholder meetings, ClimaResponse involved actors from across the region in identifying climate risks, mapping vulnerable groups and considering local adaptation priorities. The project also launched cascading campaigns, a series of communication activities to raise awareness of its work and outputs.

In the next phase, the tools and guidance will be tested through local pilot activities and further refined for wider use across the Baltic Sea Region. They will be made available through the Digital Planning Platform for Climate Resilience, an online resource for local actors.

ClimaResponse started in March 2025 and will run until February 2028.

KEY EVENTS

Local workshops on inclusive climate resilience planning: Between August 2025 and March 2026, Ustka, Gävle, Lääne-Harju and Skuodas held 12 workshops and stakeholder meetings on local needs, inclusive climate resilience planning and engagement with vulnerable groups.

Large-scale flood exercise in Kristiansand: On 22–23 September 2025, Kristiansand conducted a flood exercise to test cross-sectoral cooperation and crisis communication during an extreme weather event.

EUSBSR Annual Forum 2025: On 29–30 October 2025 in Sopot, ClimaResponse presented its tools, guidance and upcoming activities in two breakout sessions.



The CBSS & climate dialogue

Strengthening societal resilience to the effects of climate change is a thematic focus area under the CBSS long-term priority Sustainable & Prosperous Region. Climate change has significant impacts at the local level across the Baltic Sea Region, where extreme weather events are increasing in frequency and intensity, affecting infrastructure, health, the economy and the environment. Through the ClimaResponse project, the CBSS, as lead partner, supports municipalities in strengthening climate adaptation, resilience and preparedness through practical tools, governance models and capacity-building approaches.

Workshop – Tools and guidance to strengthen local climate resilience: On 26 November 2025, ClimaResponse presented its tools and guidance to municipal representatives from across the region and gathered feedback.

BSSSC Days of Cities and Regions: On 11 May 2026 in Tallinn, ClimaResponse presented its cross-sectoral approach to integrating climate adaptation and disaster preparedness.

EUSBSR Annual Forum 2026: On 12 May 2026 in Tallinn, ClimaResponse co-led an interactive session using real-world flood data and a simulation model tested in Kristiansand to demonstrate how cross-sectoral cooperation can strengthen climate resilience.

REGIONAL IDENTITY



YOUTH



CULTURE



EDUCATION

Under the Regional Identity long-term priority, the CBSS works to strengthen regional identity, mutual understanding and cooperation across the Baltic Sea Region. By fostering a shared sense of belonging, inclusion and participation, the priority contributes to social cohesion and trust, which are some of the components of societal resilience. The work focuses on youth participation, culture and higher education.

The CBSS supports active and meaningful youth participation and representation in regional cooperation and decision-making, including through the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum (BSRYF), intergenerational dialogue and other youth initiatives.

In the area of culture, the CBSS promotes cooperation on cultural heritage, social cohesion and regional trust-building, recognising culture as a resource for strengthening societal resilience and a shared sense of belonging across the region.

In higher education, the CBSS supports cooperation and exchange between academic institutions and other regional actors, including through educational initiatives that connect research and knowledge with shared regional challenges.

Central Square
and St Mary's
Basilica in
Kraków, Poland.



YOUTH

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

During the Polish Presidency, the Baltic Sea Region Youth Forum (BSRYF) launched its third term, bringing together 20 elected members of the Committee of Youth Representatives (CYR), six Working Groups and around 70 young people engaged in its activities throughout the 2025–2026 term.

An in-person meeting was held during the Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue (BSYD) in Stockholm, bringing together around 40 BSRYF representatives to develop Working Group action plans and receive briefings on CBSS priorities, with a particular focus on security and societal resilience.

The CBSS Youth Ministerial 2026 in Warsaw brought together 25 participants from BSRYF and National Youth Councils, who jointly developed a youth policy paper for presentation at the CBSS Ministerial Session.

Throughout the Presidency, the CBSS youth cooperation structures and BSRYF developed their cooperation with regional stakeholders, including the BSPC, BSSSC and EUSBSR. They also worked to align their activities and represent young people’s priorities in regional and EU policy processes, including the revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and implementation of the EU Youth Strategy.

PROJECT UPDATES

ACTIVATE BSR

The ACTIVATE BSR project was approved for funding under the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Small Projects Programme. As a follow-up to the Estonian CBSS Youth Ministerial, the 24-month project will be implemented in partnership with the Estonian National Youth Council, the Lithuanian National Youth Council, the Regional Youth Council of Schleswig-Holstein and the Baltic Sea Cultural Centre in Gdańsk. The project focuses on youth participation and regional cooperation across the Baltic Sea Region.

Baltic Youth Waves for Democracy (BYWD)

The Erasmus+-funded BYWD project supported the development of an EUSBSR Annual Forum pre-event format consisting of five webinars and a three-day in-person meeting ahead of the Annual Forum in Gdańsk. Implemented with BSSSC as the main partner, BYWD also served as a pre-event to the Day of Cities

and Regions in Sopot. Through the project, 45 youth representatives participated in regional dialogue and policy discussions in Gdańsk and Sopot in October 2025.

Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue (BSYD)

The 12th Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue was held as a capacity-building event for active BSRYF members. The programme provided participants with briefings on CBSS priorities, supported knowledge and skills development, and facilitated the preparation of Working Group action plans.

KEY EVENTS

BSRYF Election Meeting 2026

The BSRYF Election Meeting in April 2026 attracted 45 individual candidates and five youth organisations from across the Baltic Sea Region. A new Chair, 13 members of the Committee of Youth Representatives (CYR) and two Steering Group organisations were elected for the 2026–2027 term.

BSR Hackathon [#b_hack] 2025

Held under the motto “One Region – Borderless Innovation”, the BSR Hackathon 2025 brought together 50 participants across seven thematic tracks. The winning project focused on visualising climate risks through digital solutions.

BSPC Annual Conference

Seven BSRYF members participated in the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum in Åland, organised by ReGeneration 2030, engaging with parliamentarians and youth stakeholders from across the region.

Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue

The 12th Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue brought together 40 active BSRYF members in Stockholm for capacity building, exchange and development of Working Group action plans.

EUSBSR Annual Forum youth participation

Two EUSBSR Annual Fora took place during the Polish Presidency. At both, the CBSS supported the participation of young people and co-organised pre-events with BSSSC to prepare participants for the Forum.

CBSS Youth Ministerial 2026

The CBSS Youth Ministerial 2026 brought together

BSRYF members and representatives of National Youth Councils, who developed a joint youth policy paper for presentation at the CBSS Ministerial Session 2026.

BSPC Youth Pre-Event 2026

Following the CBSS Youth Ministerial and the work of the relevant BSRYF Working Group, BSRYF members participated in a BSPC youth pre-meeting in Neustadt in Holstein. Participants developed recommendations for consideration at the BSPC Annual Conference in Lübeck in August 2026 and its accompanying youth forum.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

Youth Recommendations for the CBSS Ministerial Session 2026: Recommendations on security, digitalisation, climate and connectivity, developed at the CBSS Youth Ministerial 2026 and presented to CBSS Foreign Ministers at the 23rd CBSS Ministerial Session in Sopot.



The CBSS & youth

The CBSS supports active and meaningful youth participation and representation in institutions and decision-making processes across the Baltic Sea Region, including through intergenerational dialogue on issues affecting young people. It provides a forum for policy dialogue and supports coordination among relevant actors and ongoing regional processes. The CBSS also provides educational resources for young people and decision-makers to support the implementation of CBSS decisions and mandates related to youth participation and engagement.

CULTURE

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

During the Polish Presidency, the BSR Cultural Pearls project concluded after engaging more than 50 cities in developing and implementing Culture and Resilience Action Plans. Its work continued through the 2027 Cultural Pearls call and the Future Cities Interreg platform, co-led by the CBSS and focusing on civic engagement for community resilience. The RESCOM – Resilient Communities Learning Platform also concluded, connecting Ukrainian and Baltic Sea Region actors and producing the publication *Social Resilience in Times of Crisis*. The CBSS further supported Baltic Sea Region–Ukraine cooperation, including at the EUSBSR Annual Forum 2026, and contributed to the work of the Baltic Region Heritage Committee, linking the protection of cultural heritage with social resilience.

PROJECT UPDATES

Conclusion of BSR Cultural Pearls (Interreg Baltic Sea Region project). The CBSS-led project supported smaller towns and cities in developing Culture and Resilience Action Plans to strengthen social cohesion, a sense of belonging and community resilience through culture.

Launch of the Cultural Pearls Executive Board and Secretariat, including the 2027 Cultural Pearls call. The new structure supports the continuation of Cultural Pearls beyond the original project period.

Conclusion of RESCOM – Resilient Communities Learning Platform. The Swedish Institute-supported platform facilitated the exchange of practical experience on community resilience in times of crisis between Ukrainian and Baltic Sea Region stakeholders.

Launch of the Future Cities Platform (Interreg Baltic Sea Region platform project). The platform builds on the outcomes of Cultural Pearls and other projects, focusing on civic engagement and participation for democratic and social resilience in cities.

FIMI-COHERE – Coherent Regional Response to Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference. A project application was submitted to the Swedish Institute to support greater coherence in regional efforts to address FIMI in the Baltic Sea Region.

KEY EVENTS

- Cultural Pearls Network Conference and RESCOM Learning Lab II. Płock, Poland, 16-19 September 2025.
- Cultural Pearls Evening. Gdańsk, Poland, 28 October 2025.
- EUSBSR AF 2025 Workshop “Soft core of hard security”. Sopot, Poland, 30 October 2025
- Culture for Resilience (C4R) Annual Forum. Varde, Denmark, 25-27 November 2025.
- Brussels Strategic Dialogue on Community resilience. 3 December 2025
- EUSBSR AF 2026 Workshop “From Crisis to Capacity”. Tallinn, Estonia, 12 May 2026.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

- Cultivating Resilience: 2025 Summary Report (BSR Cultural Pearls)
- Social Resilience in times of crisis: Perspectives from Ukraine and Moldova (RESCOM)



The CBSS & culture

The CBSS’s work on culture promotes cooperation on cultural heritage, social cohesion and regional trust-building, using culture to strengthen resilience and foster a shared sense of belonging across the region. It highlights culture as a resource for social resilience, supporting participation, community cohesion and local capacity to respond to change.

EDUCATION

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

During the Polish Presidency, CBSS work on higher education focused on regional identity, democratic resilience and closer links between academic cooperation and wider regional challenges. Questions of identity and belonging were addressed through the CBSS Summer University in Greifswald, organised within the PSF-funded YoPeNET 2.0 project under the theme “Resilient Identities in the Baltic Sea Region: Balticness in Transition”. The connection between identity, migration, youth participation and democracy was also developed through the Horizon Europe We-ID project. Its mid-term meeting and stakeholder workshop at the CBSS Secretariat in Stockholm included a panel on the role of youth participation in social cohesion and democratic resilience. The CBSS also engaged with higher education networks and regional cooperation, including through the 1st Baltic Region Rectors’ Forum in Gdańsk. The Secretariat contributed to a discussion on the strategic transformation of the Baltic Sea Region and the future of regional and global cooperation.

PROJECT UPDATES

In October 2025, the PSF-funded project **Young People Network for Baltic Futures** was launched. The project produced the Baltic Futures Foresight Report in March 2026 and prepared the CBSS Summer School in Gdańsk, held on 13–18 July 2026 under the theme “Youth, Resilience and Future in the Baltic Sea Region”.

Within the Horizon Europe **We-ID** project on identities, migration and democracy, the CBSS Secretariat team and associated researchers in Lithuania conducted interviews and, in June 2026, produced the report *Migration, Identity, and Social Cohesion in Lithuania: The Case of Lithuania in the We-ID Project*.

KEY EVENTS

The We-ID project held its midterm meeting and stakeholder workshops at the CBSS Secretariat in Stockholm in June 2026, where the Lithuanian case study was presented and discussed. The programme included a panel discussion on 16 June focusing on the role of youth participation in social cohesion and democratic resilience. Drawing on local perspectives and findings from the project’s field research, the discussion examined European approaches to identity, migration, belonging and democracy.



The CBSS & education

The CBSS recognises the role of higher education in strengthening regional identity and cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. It supports educational initiatives that connect academic networks and respond to regional knowledge and training needs, including those of public authorities, municipalities and other organisations. Activities include the Baltic Sea Region Summer University and projects that link education and research with practical regional challenges. Through this work, the CBSS supports exchange and cooperation between higher education institutions and other actors across its Member States.

BACK PAGES

Fishing boats
resting on a
beach on Poland's
Baltic Sea coast
in winter.



PROJECT SUPPORT FACILITY

PSF CALL 2026

The Project Support Facility (PSF) Call 2026 was launched under the Polish Presidency with a focus on strengthening societal resilience and safety in the Baltic Sea Region. Project proposals were invited to address areas including societal security, the protection of critical infrastructure, resilience to hybrid and other grey-zone threats, and environmental and maritime security.

The call received 60 project proposals, of which five were shortlisted by the Selection Committee and approved for funding by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO). The selected projects address all three CBSS long-term priorities, individually or in combination, and were assessed on their relevance to the priorities and the theme of the 2026 call, their contribution to regional cooperation, quality and sustainability, and their partnership structure. Each project involves partners from at least three CBSS Member States.

APPROVED PROJECTS

CPB-Nord: Crisis Preparedness Barometer – Nordic Extension. Lead: University of Latvia. Countries: LV, NO, IS. Extends the Crisis Preparedness Barometer to Oslo and Reykjavík, providing comparable data on risk perceptions and individual preparedness.

HybridMinds. Lead: Eesti Vältlussels. Countries: EE, PL, LT. Develops educational materials for students aged 11–19 to strengthen critical thinking, media literacy and resilience to disinformation.

VASAB Young Planners’ Summer School 2026: Navigate Planning Through Changes. Lead: State Digital Development Agency of Latvia (VASAB Secretariat). Countries: LV, PL, EE, DE. Brings together young spatial planners to develop approaches to climate change, infrastructure vulnerability and hybrid threats.

Strengthening Safeguarding Responses to Harmful Sexual Behaviour and Developmental Trauma among Children in the Baltic Sea Region. Lead: Marshal’s Office of the Lubuskie Voivodeship. Countries: PL, LT, EE. Develops and pilots shared approaches to harmful sexual behaviour and developmental trauma among children and adolescents.

3B Public Opinion Survey at Evacuation Measures. Lead: State Fire and Rescue Service of Latvia. Countries: LV, LT, EE. Surveys public attitudes and expected behaviour during evacuations to support national and cross-border evacuation planning.

ONGOING PROJECTS

SAFE-BS2BKS. Lead: HELCOM. Countries: FI, DK, LV, UA. Transfers Baltic Sea experience in managing submergèd munitions to the Black Sea region, with a focus on environmental security and Ukraine.

CHIPS – Child Participation Initiative for Child Protection Systems. Lead: Gelbèkit vaikus. Countries: LT, EE, LV, FI. Involves children in developing practical proposals to improve integrated child protection systems.

Young People Network for Baltic Futures (YoPeN-ET-Futures). Lead: Zatoka Foundation. Countries: PL, DE, EE, SE. Combines strategic foresight and capacity building to engage young researchers and professionals in addressing future regional challenges.

Sustaining Communities and Ecosystems of the Baltic Sea Region. Lead: Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation. Countries: EE, PL, FI, UA. Supports community-led approaches to climate adaptation, cultural heritage and biodiversity protection.

#JournalismForSecurity. Lead: Latvian Transatlantic Organisation. Countries: LV, EE, PL. Trains local journalists in media literacy, crisis communication and responses to disinformation.

NextGenDemocracy Baltics. Lead: Media Hub Riga. Countries: LV, FI, LT, EE, DK. Engages young journalists and journalism students in developing approaches to AI, reliable information and the changing media environment.

Culture Connect: Dialogue for Resilient and Safe Communities in the BSR. Lead: ARS BALTICA / Nordkolleg. Countries: DE, PL, LV. Uses cultural dialogue and community engagement to support social cohesion and resilience.

Baltic Model United Nations 2027. Lead: NGO Mondo. Countries: EE, LV, LT. Engages young people in regional challenges, policy dialogue and global citizenship through Model United Nations activities.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Joint Crisis Communication in the Baltic Region. Lead: Swedish Civil Defence and Resilience Agency (MCF). Countries: SE, FI, EE, LT, LV. Established a regional network for cooperation and knowledge exchange among crisis communicators.

Prepared Together: Stronger Together. Lead: University of Latvia. Countries: LV, FI, DE. Developed the Baltic Sea Region Threat Perception and Preparedness Survey to provide comparable data on public preparedness and risk perceptions.

Development of Instructions for Long-term Quality Assurance Systems in National Barnahus Networks. Lead: World Childhood Foundation Germany. Countries: DE, SE, FI. Developed and piloted a common approach to quality assessment and improvement for Barnahus services.

Art Connects: Youth from the Baltic. Lead: Kunsthalle Rostock. Countries: DE, DK, LV. Engaged young people in exploring Baltic regional identity through art and cross-border exchange.



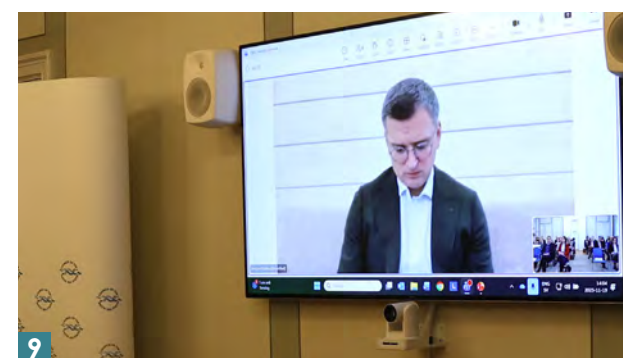
About the PSF

Established in 2012, the Project Support Facility (PSF) is the CBSS’s seed funding tool for regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. It provides co-financing for the preparation and implementation of small-scale, community- or expert-driven projects involving partners from at least three CBSS Member States. Operating within the CBSS’s three long-term priority areas, the PSF supports cross-border partnerships, networks and joint initiatives. In recent funding rounds, the PSF has prioritised projects under the Safe & Secure Region long-term priority, reflecting the CBSS’s increased focus on security, resilience and preparedness.

THE CBSS THROUGH THE LENS

Selected CBSS events during the Polish CBSS Presidency 2025-2026

- [1, 2] Estonia's Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna symbolically handed over the Presidency of the CBSS to Poland's Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski on 23 June 2026.
- [3, 4] Informal Ministerial Meeting of the CBSS, Warsaw, 4 March 2026. Attended by Foreign Ministers and top diplomats of the CBSS and EU High Representative Kaja Kallas, at the invitation of Poland's Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski.
- [5] Polish Special Forces demonstration during the CBSS Ministerial Session, Sopot, 28-29 May 2026.
- [6] Munich Security Conference 2026, Munich, 15 February 2026. Icelandic and Polish Ministers for Foreign Affairs Þorgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir and Radosław Sikorski, and Director General of the CBSS Secretariat Gustav Lindström.
- [7-8] Munich Security Conference 2026.
- [9] Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba delivers a keynote address at the CBSS Security Seminar in Stockholm on 19 November 2025.
- [10] CBSS Security Seminar 2025.
- [11] Polish Ambassador to Sweden Karolina Ostrzyniewska and Director General of the CBSS Secretariat Gustav Lindström at the Polish Embassy in Stockholm in August 2025.
- [12] CBSS Political Directors Meeting, Warsaw, 15 January 2026.
- [13] CBSS Legal Advisers Meetings, Stockholm, 6 May 2026.
- [14-15] "Advancing a Sustainable Baltic Sea through Regional Cooperation" event in Stockholm on 27 March 2026, co-organised by the CBSS Secretariat, the Polish Embassy in Sweden, and Race for the Baltic.
- [15] H.E. Normans Penke, Ambassador of Latvia to Sweden; H.E. Bryndís Kjartansdóttir, Ambassador of Iceland to Sweden; Daniel Westlén, State Secretary at Sweden's Ministry of Climate and Enterprise; H.E. Karolina Ostrzyniewska, Ambassador of Poland to Sweden; Marcin Kotlarek, CEO of Race for the Baltic; and Gustav Lindström, Director General of the CBSS Secretariat.





[16-20] European Forum Against Trafficking in Human Beings – Countering Organised Crime and Protecting Victims (THBxOC 2025), co-organised by the CBSS and Europol in Stockholm on 3-4 December 2025.

[18] Edi Mujaj, Head of the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) at the CBSS; Nina Larsson, Minister for Gender Equality in Sweden; Gustav Lindström, Director General of the CBSS Secretariat.

[21] Workshop on human trafficking for diplomatic and consular personnel, Warsaw, 8 October 2025.

[22] Financial investigations and cryptocurrencies workshop co-organised by the CBSS and Europol, The Hague, 14-15 April 2026.

[23] Expert seminar on the instrumentalisation of migration, Warsaw, 17 April 2026.

[24] Side event at the Conference of the OSCE Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons, Vienna, 20 April 2026.

[25] Meeting of the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) in Gdańsk on 20-21 May 2026.

[26-27] EGSME seminar on green shipping corridors and the maritime digital twin, Gdańsk, 9 June 2026.

[28] 24th Meeting of Directors General for Civil Protection, in Gniew, Poland on 16–18 June 2026.

[29] Baltic Excellence Programme, Warsaw, 16-19 March 2026.

[30] RiA-ENGAGE study visit, Sweden, 29-31 May 2026.

[31] CBSS seminar on submerged munitions in the Baltic Sea, Stockholm, 10-12 March 2026.

[32] Joint CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk (EG CAR) and TF-THB meeting, Warsaw, 9–10 October 2025.





[33] CBSS Summer University “Building Resilient Identities” in Greifswald, Germany on 15-20 September 2025.
[34] C4R Culture for Resilience Forum in Varde, Denmark on 25-27 November 2025.
[35] Baltic Region Heritage Committee (BRHC) Seminar in Jelonki, Poland on 17 June 2026.
[36] CBSS youth representatives attending the spring meeting of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) in Brussels at the European Parliament on 2 March 2026.
[37] CBSS Youth Ministerial in Warsaw on 20-22 April 2026.
[38-39] [#b_hack] Baltic Sea Region Hackathon 2025 in Lübeck, Germany on 24-27 July 2025, organised and funded by the State of Schleswig-Holstein, in partnership with the CBSS and TH Lübeck.
[40] 12th Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue Stockholm, 21-25 November 2025.



EUSBSR ANNUAL FORA 2025 & 2026

Under the Polish Presidency, the CBSS co-organised two Annual Fora of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), held in Sopot, Poland, in 2025 and Tallinn, Estonia, in 2026. Both fora placed resilience at the centre of regional cooperation. In addition to contributing to the respective organising teams, the CBSS co-hosted sessions addressing resilience, security, digital transformation, climate adaptation and cooperation with Ukraine.

SOPOT 2025

In Sopot, the 2025 Annual Forum, held on 29–30 October under the theme *Securing the Future: Stronger Together – Building Stability in Times of Uncertainty*, focused on resilience and security amid growing geopolitical, environmental, economic and social challenges. The CBSS co-hosted four sessions covering urban preparedness and resilience, the societal dimensions of security, responsible use of artificial intelligence, and climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction. The forum was hosted by the Pomorskie Voivodeship and organised together with the CBSS Secretariat, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Baltic Sea Strategy Point.

TALLINN 2026

In Tallinn, the 2026 Annual Forum, held on 11–13 May, continued the focus on resilience, addressing regional security, the Baltic Sea environment, economic competitiveness and demographic challenges. The CBSS contributed to the programme through sessions including an interactive flood simulation on local crisis preparedness and a session on strengthening practical cooperation with Ukraine and learning from Ukrainian experience in building community resilience. The forum was jointly organised by the City of Tallinn, the CBSS Secretariat, the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Baltic Sea Strategy Point.

[41, 42] EUSBSR Annual Forum 2025 in Sopot, Poland on 29–30 October 2025. [42] Ignacy Niemczycki, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland; Gustav Lindström, Director General of the CBSS Secretariat; Małgorzata Bonikowska, President of the Centre for International Relations.

[43-45] EUSBSR Annual Forum 2026 in Tallinn, Estonia on 11–13 May 2026. [44] Toomas Hendrik Ilves, former president of Estonia. [45] Interactive flood simulation on local crisis preparedness, co-hosted by the CBSS-led ClimaResponse project.



COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS 2025-2026



The day-to-day decision-making of the CBSS is led by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO). The CSO consists of representatives from the Foreign Ministries of the CBSS Member States. The Member State that holds the Presidency of the CBSS is also chairing the CSO.

LIST OF SENIOR OFFICIALS 2025-2026

POLAND (CBSS Presidency 2025-2026)
Ms Katarzyna Barcikowska, Head of the Baltic Multilateral Unit, European Policy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

ESTONIA
Mr Tõnis Nirk, Ambassador-at-Large for Baltic Sea Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

DENMARK
Mr Peter Wilhelm Linde, Chief Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (until December 2025)
Ms Katja Cecilie Rottensten Kofoed, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

FINLAND
Ms Helena Tuuri, Ambassador, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

GERMANY
Ms Annika Schechinger, Head of Unit Division E21, Northern Europe (EU), Federal Foreign Office

ICELAND
Mr Emil Breki Hreggvidsson, Director, International and Security Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

LATVIA
Ms Ieva Jirgena-Krokforda, Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

LITHUANIA
Ms Lina Sučilaitė, Chief Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (until February 2026)
Ms Rasa Kairienė, Chief Counsellor and Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NORWAY
Mr Jens Erik Grøndahl, Senior Advisor, Section for Northern and Western Europe, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

SWEDEN
Ms Eva Areskoug, Deputy Director, Europe and North America Department Nordic-Baltic Section, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE
Mr Eduard Auer, Head of Division of the Regional Eastern Partnership, Regional Cooperation and OSCE (EURCA.1), European External Action Service (EEAS)



