

The Baltic Sea Region – an Area of Knowledge
and
Maritime Safety in the Baltic Sea Region

Resolution

adopted by the 12th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC),
assembled in Oulu, Finland, 8-9 September 2003

The participants of the Conference

concentrating on

1. KNOWLEDGE-BASED SOCIETY in the Baltic Sea Region as well as on its impact on the LABOUR MARKET,
2. MARITIME SAFETY in the context of transport and environment in the Baltic Sea Region

referring to point 1

taking note of

- the globalisation and the rapid change of society from an industrial over a service-oriented towards a knowledge-based society, founded on gender equality
- the internationally recognised Information Society Index, indicating that no European Region is as well prepared for the knowledge-based society as Northern Europe
- the OECD definition of lifelong learning, which embraces individual and social development of all kinds and in all settings – formally, in schools, vocational, tertiary and adult education institutions, and non-formally, at home, at work and in the community, focusing on the standards of knowledge and skills needed by all, regardless of age

call on the CBSS and their governments to

- use the great chance which a knowledge-based society and its corresponding network offers for the region-building process in the Baltic Sea Area, especially by creating an efficient and secure IT infrastructure for the benefit of all citizens in the region
- improve chances for the knowledge-based society by promoting language skills, including native languages, and the understanding of other nations cultures
- promote the mutual recognition of diplomas and the creation of multi-institutional degrees in the Baltic Sea Region based on harmonized educational standards and programmes, thus establishing the requirements for cross-border mobility of labour resources

- increase physical mobility by means of establishing a special charter for the visiting scholars and research fellows, including the vision of long-term goal of ultimate visa-free travel between Russia and the EU
- agree on a common strategy for the development of a knowledge-based society in the Baltic Sea region, implementing such a strategy by joint projects, joint educational programmes and jointly operated scientific networks, such as distance learning, distance teaching, Baltic Sea summer schools and virtual networks of Baltic Sea universities
- make the Baltic Sea Region a pilot area for the knowledge-based society implementation process, carrying out observation, characterisation and classification of the measures under review, and setting up standards for future actions in Europe
- consider the possibility of establishing a data base of job vacancies in the Baltic Sea Region in order to provide mutual exchange of labour force, and to use the existing data bases on job vacancies and to develop them in a way which is useful for the Baltic labour market
- organise, apart from studies and joint research projects, much deeper processes of communication and learning, focusing on a series of activities in the field of culture and citizenship
- attach priority emphasis to a much more effective interrelationship between education, vocational training and employment
- increase skills and lifelong learning in order to ensure employability, competitiveness and welfare in the labour market and in the society in the Baltic Sea States
- strengthen the social dialogue in the labour market, promoting access to the labour market with equal treatment for all, and developing conditions at working places
- bear in mind that the Baltic Sea Region can only flourish if there are well-functioning labour market structures and a qualified labour force
- support technology transfer institutions in order to stimulate innovation mechanisms

agree to

- support the development of a network of schools of public health around the Baltic Sea, in order to improve the societies' capacity to prevent and control serious threats to people's health and with the aim of coordinating new technologies and training programmes

referring to point 2

taking note of

- a growing number of shipping accidents in the European region, which already have brought about devastating damage to the population, the environment and the economy and the great danger that the Baltic Sea can also be affected anytime by a similar ecological catastrophe

- part II “Maritime Safety and Security” of the resolutions adopted by the participants of the 10th and 11th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Greifswald (2001) and St. Petersburg (2002) and the ongoing process of its implementation

- the results and approaches of the HELCOM/IMO/EU workshop held on 11th and 12th March 2003 in Rostock-Warnemünde (Germany)

- the decision, as well as the related resolutions, adopted at the 24th regular HELCOM Session, the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting, and the First Joint HELCOM/OSPAR Ministerial Meeting held on 25-26 June 2003 in Bremen (Germany), as an important, though not yet sufficient European step on the way towards recognising maritime safety and security as an priority, and hence, as an important prerequisite for the protection of the marine environment

call on the CBSS and their governments as well as on HELCOM to

step up their efforts in all relevant organizations, including the framework of IMO, to improve maritime safety and security all over, especially by giving their full backing to:

- the efforts towards designating the Baltic Sea as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) within the IMO and introducing stricter rules for the prevention of pollution from ships

- introducing on the international level within the framework of all appropriate institutions, including IMO, uniform rules to restrict access of substandard ships, and imposing a ban effectively prohibiting access of category-1 single-hull oil tankers, to European waters and ports

- looking into the possibility for unified application of rules for the ice classification of ships and arrangement of icebreaker services during the winter period in the Baltic Sea area

- supporting the European Commission in implementation of its proposals for improving maritime safety and security in accordance with the international law of the sea

- establishing and identifying, as soon as possible, places of refuge and intensifying co-operation among Baltic Sea countries in order to implement the European Community’s places of refuge concept, and making additional efforts to quickly implement the procedure for directing damaged ships to ports, and providing compensation for irrecoverable losses

- a speedy ratification by the Baltic Sea States of the new IMO convention on increased liability levels of the oil funds as agreed this year

- giving priority to ratifying the conventions on civil liability for bunker oil pollution damage and damage caused by dangerous goods, and to signing and ratifying a convention on the removal of wrecks

- developing a “Baltic Sea Memorandum of Understanding” among the Baltic Sea countries which will guarantee environmentally sound maritime transport in the entire Baltic Sea Region by reducing emissions from shipping operations, in particular exhaust emissions in ports
- work for the most efficient coastal patrol and airborne surveillance possible, and for the establishment of special zones in dangerous areas of the Baltic Sea in which large sea-going vessels (especially oil and chemical tankers) will not be allowed to sail without pilots
- systematically supporting the ratification of important international conventions, so that as many conventions as possible will be applied by the Baltic Sea countries

agree to

- stress the importance of BSPC to be active in following the development of the Wider Europe initiatives
- call upon the Standing Committee to follow the assessment of the work of CBSS and to strengthen the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference as the Parliamentary dimension of CBSS
- convey their particular thanks to the Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern for its significant contribution in preparing this resolution
- ask the Standing Committee, together with the BSPC observers in HELCOM, to pursue its engagement in the issues related to maritime safety
- thank all those involved in combating the consequences of the latest tanker accidents

accept

- with gratitude the invitation of the Norwegian Parliament Stortinget to hold the 13th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference on 29 - 31 August 2004 in Bergen.