

Information on the political activity that has been carried out in Germany on the basis of the Conference Resolution adopted by the 15th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference held in Reykjavik, Iceland 3 – 5 September 2006

The Resolution calls on governments in the Baltic Sea region, the CBSS, and the EU to give coordinated **support to the new EU neighbouring countries** in building civil and democratic societies and to promote reform processes in these countries. It goes without saying that this continues to be a factor of major importance for the German government which underscored this by making the European Union's Neighbourhood Policy a focus of its EU Presidency.

With regard to strengthening **interaction between the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)** the German Foreign Office has supported the Swedish CBSS Chair's efforts to intensify practical cooperation, i.e. extending mutual invitations to meetings and promoting information exchange. Through its involvement in meetings of the BSPC Standing Committee at the working level and contacts with its secretariat the German Foreign Office has made an active contribution towards achieving the objective of intensifying practical cooperation.

The German Foreign Office has also been involved in efforts to support and further develop the **Northern Dimension**. This has taken place on the basis of its active accompaniment of the reform process in 2005/2006, on the basis of its presence at the Parliamentary Conference on the Northern Dimension organized by the European Parliament at the end of February this year, and on the basis of its co-chair role for the second meeting of the Northern Dimension Steering Group in June this year. The two existing **Northern Dimension partnerships** in the environmental and health sectors have received contributions from the corresponding ministries both in terms of personnel and finances. The following contributions are being provided in the framework of the environmental partnership: 10 million euros for the "nuclear window" and a further 10 million euros for the "environmental window" (contribution period 2006-2009). An earmarked contribution will be made to the partnership in the health sector.

With regard to an **integrated maritime policy** the focus of attention has been on the consultation process that has taken place on the basis of the European Commission Maritime Policy Green Book published in June 2006. The European Conference on the Future Maritime Policy of the EU held in Bremen from 2 to 4 May 2007 was a key contribution to the Green Book by the German EU Presidency. Attendance of the conference by high-level political officials (including Chancellor Angela Merkel and Transport Minister Wolfgang Tiefensee) as well as the presence of more than five hundred guests from across Europe underscored the importance attributed to this policy area. With the "Bremen Declaration on The Future Maritime Policy of the EU" the Conference made a significant contribution to the ongoing debate. This declaration was handed on to the Commission and the Portuguese EU Presidency. The following BSPC Resolution items will doubtless be taken into account, at least in part:

establishing a balance between the many competing economic benefits of the sea, on the one hand, and adequate protection of the marine environment on the other;

including marine sciences and technologies for marine resources as priority fields in future research programmes;

striving for harmonization of the current variety of political and legal measures, programmes, and action plans at the European level within the framework of an integrated European maritime policy; and

pursuing a European fisheries policy that will take into account the particularities of the Baltic Sea and implement the principle of sustainable fisheries.

A debate and a resolution of 21 June 2007 entitled “**For a future looking European maritime policy**” was the contribution of the German Bundestag to the European Maritime Policy Green Book.

With regard to strengthening cooperation in the field of **maritime safety and security** the German government will continue to play an active role in forums such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO), where a Working Group on Maritime Security was set up in 2006 with a view to ensuring efficient coordination at the national level.

With regard to the **North Stream Gas Pipeline** it goes without saying for the German government that the project must be carried out in compliance with all relevant international commitments. The German government is endeavouring to ensure the greatest possible level of transparency among the countries surrounding the Baltic by voluntarily providing information in international bodies such as the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) and the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

With regard to **eutrophication** of the Baltic Sea, only measures that are taken jointly by all of the Baltic Sea States will lead to a lasting solution of the problem. The German Foreign Office takes the view that the Helsinki Commission is the body best suited for addressing this issue. HELCOM is currently working on a Baltic Sea Action Plan aimed at arriving at lasting solutions that will protect and preserve the marine environment. Eutrophication was a focal topic at the CBSS conference of environment and agriculture ministers, held in Sweden in April 2007. The German government sent a delegation and took an active part in the conference, as proposed in the BSPC Resolution.

In a debate and a resolution of 6 July 2007 entitled "**Continuing to strengthen Baltic Sea cooperation and taking advantage of opportunities**" the German Parliament called upon the German Government:

1. to endeavour to promote the expansion of Baltic Sea cooperation through its activities in the Council of the Baltic Sea States. The various governmental, non-governmental, regional, and local players as well as existing networks in the Baltic Sea Region need to be involved more strongly in this context. At the parliamentary level this also includes the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. The expansion of Baltic Sea cooperation should take place in close cooperation and coordination with the European Union;

2. to endeavour to see to it that the Baltic Sea Region positions itself as one of the most attractive and competitive regions of the world with sustainable protection of its ecosystems and that the Baltic Sea will become the cleanest and safest sea in Europe by the year 2015. The creation of a network of ecologically representative and valuable marine parks has been proposed in this connection. It will also be necessary to strengthen our commitment to reducing pollutant and nutrient effluents from agriculture, local authorities, shipping, and industry as well as the negative effects of overfishing in the Baltic Sea Region. The HELCOM measures to fight eutrophication and the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan must be supported;

3. to endeavour to develop an integrated and sustainable maritime policy in the Baltic Sea Region, to create extensive ties between areas such as maritime industry, shipping, coastal protection, offshore energy, fisheries, or marine environment, to link the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy with those of social justice and environmental protection, to work to achieve conditions of fair competition in the shipping, port, and shipbuilding industries in the Baltic Sea Region, and to enforce compliance with international rules on the protection of intellectual property. There are potentials here for growth of the maritime sector and prospects of new jobs being created;

4. to consider the proposal put forward by the European Parliament to open a regional office of the European Investment Bank (EIB) in the Baltic Sea Region and to make relevant contacts with the EIB;

5. to endeavour in consultations held in the International Maritime Organization (IMO), in the Council of the Baltic Sea States, and in the European Union to see to it that an agreement is reached on taking a coordinated approach to preventing tanker and other shipping accidents in the Baltic Sea and that for cases when collisions do occur a coordinated mechanism is in place for effectively counteracting the effects of these accidents. The national coast guards need to be involved in helping to see to it that IMO-specified tanker routes are adhered to. Consideration needs to be given to introducing a pilot requirement for oil tankers and other ships carrying hazardous cargo in the Baltic Sea. Consideration also needs to be given to introducing a general pilot requirement for narrow straits such as *Kadetrinne* and *Öresund*. Since the security of shipping is one of the most important challenges being faced in the Baltic Sea Region, a proposal has been made to expand joint vessel traffic management information systems (VTMIS) from the Gulf of Finland to the entire Baltic Sea Region. In addition to this, measures need to be taken to promote the use of innovative navigation technologies as well as to support the development and introduction of the Galileo satellite navigation system in connection with the GMES monitoring system (GMES = Global Monitoring for Environment and Security). We welcome the International Maritime Organization's identification and designation of the Baltic Sea as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA). The agreed ban on the transport of oil in single-hull tankers needs to be implemented and strictly enforced;

6. to endeavour to work towards the establishment of a reliable regulatory framework for sea access routes to ports and land routes connecting ports to inland areas that would safeguard the future of the port industry and make it possible to adjust to the requirements imposed by globalization;

7. to support international efforts to avoid and reduce ship emissions in ports as well as to standardize electrical connections and implement shore-to-ship power supply systems in ports;

8. to use the resources of the Baltic Sea effectively on the basis of an integrative European Maritime Policy and to assess to what extent there is a need for EU action to be taken. Mindful of the principles of subsidiarity and separation of powers it must be determined whether or not there is a need to take action at the international, European, national, or regional levels in order to achieve the EU maritime policy objectives that have been established. In most cases the formulated objectives could be achieved by monitoring compliance with existing rules. This would require stronger involvement of and coordination with non-EU countries such as Russia and Norway in connection with joint regional interests, as is productively expressed in the HELCOM framework. In addition, support should be provided for the establishment of a Maritime Policy Task Force in the framework of the Council of the Baltic Sea States;

9. to endeavour to protect and replenish fish stocks in the Baltic Sea Region and to help formulate a comprehensive plan in the European Union to restore and preserve natural salmon stocks in the Baltic Sea water system. The principle of sustainable fisheries needs to be implemented on the basis of active participation in the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) for the Baltic Sea Region;

10. to impose sharp restrictions on illegal fishing in the Baltic Sea. There is a need here for comprehensive cooperation on the part of all Baltic Sea States in carrying out a strict enforcement regime and in applying stiff sanctions and for the enforcement regime to be implemented in the same way by all Baltic Sea States;

11. to intensify research on invading species that constitute a threat to the biodiversity of the Baltic Sea and to take corresponding countermeasures, given the fact that species such as the ctenophores that have invaded the Baltic Sea pose a significant threat to native species such as the Baltic cod, the population of which has already been decimated;

12. to help ensure that the possibility of a common energy market is taken under consideration and to work in the European Union to promote joint projects for energy efficiency and renewable energy sources – taking into account the potential of the region as a source of bioenergy – as well as the use of biomass, solar energy, wind energy, and hydroelectric energy, and to support work being done in the framework of cooperation in the energy sector in the Baltic Sea Region (Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation – BASREC, Baltic 21);

13. to reduce transmission losses in connection with distributing electricity through the power grid and increase energy efficiency in the Baltic Sea Region by installing new transmission lines and substations. The German Bundestag welcomes the efforts being undertaken to modernize existing grids and to build new ones as well as the objective of creating a common grid within the EU;

14. to endeavour in the Council of the Baltic Sea States to ensure that all Baltic Sea States provide information to each other in the relevant bodies with regard to the possible economic, ecological, and social consequences of infrastructure projects in and on the Baltic Sea. The German Government is called upon to continue to endeavour to ensure that conscientious environmental impact assessments are carried out for all infrastructure projects to be implemented in the Baltic Sea Region, doing so in accordance with the relevant international commitments we have assumed, and to guarantee in this connection that international environmental standards will be complied with. An effort should be made to get the Russian Federation to ratify the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context;

15. to emphasize to all partners involved how important it is to respect internationally recognized principles with regard to sustainable development, good governance, transparency and participation, gender equality, minority rights, and the protection of indigenous peoples;

16. to endeavour to ensure support at the European level and in the Council of the Baltic Sea States for the proposal put forward by the European Parliament to establish a "Baltic without borders" programme that would help facilitate the crossing of borders in the region and, similarly, to endeavour to ensure that facilitations are worked towards for the crossing of borders between EU member states and the Russian Federation;

17. to support the proposal put forward by the European Parliament to expand the Nordic triangle of Trans-European Networks to cover the entire region and to include the roads and rail lines of the Barents and "Bottnisch" corridors in the TEN system. The same applies with regard to the demand for realization of the "Rail Baltica" project as well as for follow-up after the establishment of a high-speed train line for the entire region. It should be taken into account that the provision of Community funding will be very important for the completion of the "Via Baltica" motorway, a priority project, by the year 2013. Furthermore, the German Government is called upon to provide support for extending the Trans-European Networks from the German Baltic Sea ports to Scandinavia so as to create an effective link from sea (Mediterranean) to sea (Baltic) and, in doing so, to promote the development of seaport hinterland connections. As stated in the German Government Coalition Agreement, the Fehmarn-Belt Bridge project is to be pursued as an international public-private partnership;

18. to promote environmentally friendly short-haul sea transport in the EU by supporting Motorways of the Sea in the TEN framework, since this would help to take traffic off crowded roads and reduce the volume of emissions produced by all modes of transport. The focus in this connection should not be solely on financial support programmes, but rather on all measures aimed at promoting sea transport between EU ports in competition with overland transport;

19. to continue to take seriously the need for genuine cooperation between the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the European Union, regional institutions, and the Russian Federation with regard to the status of Kaliningrad Oblast. Two objectives in this context should be a more open pilot region with improved access to the EU internal market and freedom of maritime shipping in the entire Baltic Sea;

20. to endeavour to ensure that the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) is based more closely on practical realities in the fight against widespread diseases as well as in connection with providing support and funding for health-related projects. At the same time, consideration should be given to whether or not Kaliningrad Oblast can be included in NDPHS;

21. against the backdrop of growing numbers of cross-border commuters, to make "cross-border labour markets" a topic of discussion in the Council of the Baltic Sea States and to support a policy that would lead to the establishment of information centres for commuters at heavily frequented border crossings in the region with a view to promoting the mobility of workers and improving their social security status, and that would help ensure that the workers in question receive detailed information on tax and social security questions. There should be better information on possibilities of employment and training in neighbouring countries in the region. Support should be provided for cross-border training projects;

22. to actively support programmes, together with the other member states of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, aimed at creating new art and communication forms and at promoting multinational exchange programmes in the area of culture;

23. to work towards the establishment of a common marketing system and integrated concepts in the tourism sector for the Baltic Sea Region. Particular potentials for development are seen in the areas of cultural tourism, city tourism, and cruise tourism;

24. to consider possibilities of providing financial support for the Baltic Sea Youth Foundation in Kiel, whose purpose is to promote youth exchange in the Baltic Sea Region, and also to ask other members of the Council of the Baltic Sea States to give consideration to providing support for the foundation;

25. to support a policy in the university sector that will promote student exchange in the region and lead to the establishment of a virtual research and scientific network in the Baltic Sea Region, and also lead to universities developing networks and creating centres of excellence that are competitive internationally;

26. in the framework of strengthened cooperation at the level of the European Union and the Council of the Baltic Sea States to see to it that more is done than has been the case in the past to fight trafficking in human beings and drugs as well as to fight organized crime in general, particularly on the eastern border of the region. At the same time, the member states are called upon to intensify their efforts to counteract terrorist threats at sea and to combine them with the measures on safety at sea indicated in item 5.

The German Bundestag also voted for a motion entitled "**Strengthening tourism in the Baltic Sea Region**" in the debate of 6 July 2007.