



Declaration
of the 18th CBSS Ministerial Session
Pionersky, the Kaliningrad Region of the Russian Federation
6 June 2013

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), consisting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden and a representative of the European Union met for its 18th Session in Pionersky, the Kaliningrad Region of the Russian Federation, at the invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia.

The Council:

reconfirmed the core role of the Council of the Baltic Sea States as a forum for all multilateral intergovernmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region in areas agreed by its Members as confirmed by the 17th Extraordinary CBSS Ministerial Session on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the CBSS in Schloss Ploen, Germany, on 5 February 2012;

recalled that the Vilnius Declaration on A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2020 provides valuable guidance for the further actions of the CBSS and **reiterated its call** on the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) to recommend further necessary steps in order to achieve the goals set out in the Vilnius Declaration to be presented at the 10th Baltic Sea States Summit to be held on 3-4 June 2014;

noted with satisfaction the significant progress achieved in the implementation of the Oslo Declaration adopted at the 16th CBSS Ministerial Session on 7 June 2011 and **recalled** the Oslo Declaration's call on the CSO to consider ways to further strengthen the effectiveness of the CBSS as a focal point of information and coordination guided by the commonly agreed vision for the region;

acknowledged with satisfaction the significant progress in achieving the objectives of the Riga Declaration on the Reform of the CBSS, including the enhanced project orientation of the organisation and **encouraged** the Member States and the EU to take advantage of the project implementation abilities of the CBSS;

reiterated its call on the CSO to evaluate and review the five established long-term priorities of the CBSS and to submit its recommendations to the 10th Baltic Sea States Summit to be held on 3-4 June 2014;

took note of the Joint Statement adopted at the Third Ministerial Meeting of the Renewed Northern Dimension on 18 February 2013 in Brussels;

recognized the importance of associating all Baltic Sea States with projects and initiatives of common interest in the Baltic Sea Region and **underlined** that duplication and overlaps should be avoided by effective coordination and **asked** the CSO to elaborate practical recommendations for improving coherence among existing regional cooperation formats;

welcomed the progress made so far and **encouraged** the further cooperation among CBSS Members in areas where mutual benefits and synergies could be achieved between the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the Strategy for the Social and Economic Development of the North-West Federal District of the Russian Federation by identifying common priorities;

underlined that the CBSS is a useful platform for intergovernmental coordination with and monitoring of regional development strategies and formats and **asked** the CSO to make relevant recommendations in this regard;

encouraged the participants of the 4th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region to be held on 11-12 November 2013 in Vilnius, hosted by the Lithuanian Presidency of the European Union together with the European Commission and the XII All-Russian Strategic Planning Forum to be held in October 2013 in Saint Petersburg, Russia, to further develop the potential of joint work;

acknowledged the importance of the concrete recommendations to improve the cooperation between the Regional Councils in the North included in the Chairman's Conclusions of the Oslo Meeting of the Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries chairing the Regional Councils in the North held on 19 January 2012 and **welcomed** the initiative of Finland, incoming presidency of the CBSS and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), to continue this process by organizing the next Meeting of Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs of these countries and the Northern Dimension with its partnerships in 2014 in Helsinki, Finland;

thanked the German and Russian CBSS Presidencies for the launch of and support for the Modernization Partnership of the South Eastern Baltic Area (SEBA) with a special focus on the Kaliningrad Region of the Russian Federation and its neighbourhood and **agreed** that the SEBA conference to be held on 7-8 June 2013 will be a benchmark occasion to present results of developed projects and to further develop this initiative to embrace the Leningrad and Pskov regions of the Russian Federation as well as other regions of the Baltic Sea area;

noted with appreciation the establishment by the CSO of a CBSS Project Support Facility for the years 2013 – 2015;

acknowledged the importance of public-private partnerships in the region and in this respect **welcomed** the establishment of the CBSS Pilot Financial Initiative as a new public-private partnership mechanism and **encouraged** other financial institutions of the Region to join the PFI;

welcomed the outcome of the High Level Conference on the Protection of the Environment of the Baltic Sea Region, held on 5-6 April 2013 in Saint Petersburg, Russia, within the

framework of the Russian CBSS Presidency, as an important step towards reaching a good environmental condition for the Baltic Sea Region;

noted with appreciation the work of the Commission on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea (HELCOM) to achieve a healthy Baltic Sea and its key role as a driving force for the implementation of the ecosystem approach, **welcomed** the upcoming HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in Copenhagen on 3 October 2013 and **encouraged** the CBSS to create further synergies with HELCOM in order to achieve the goals of sustainable development in accordance with the Vilnius Declaration;

recognised efforts made by the Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea 2010 (VASAB) to define important challenges of maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea Region and **welcomed** VASAB cooperation with HELCOM in this regard;

welcomed the forthcoming Mid-Term Review of the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development – Baltic 21 and **invited** the CSO to examine the results and make recommendations in order to improve the CBSS activities for serving as a coordination platform of sustainable development, in areas of climate change, sustainable urban-rural development, sustainable consumption, production and innovation as well as education for sustainable development;

agreed on the importance of the decisions taken at the 5th CBSS Conference of Ministers of Transport held in Moscow on 5 December 2012, **appreciated** the activities of the CBSS Expert Group on Maritime Policy and **welcomed** the adoption by the CSO of the renewed Terms of Reference and the prolongation of the mandate of this Expert Group;

recognised that the conclusions on energy security, low carbon energy policy and sustainable growth of the 6th Ministerial Meeting of the Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation of the CBSS (BASREC) held on 14-15 May 2012 and the Declaration on Energy Security adopted by the 17th CBSS Extraordinary Ministerial Session at Schloss Ploen, Germany, on 5 February 2012 deepened mutual trust and understanding and laid the basis for even closer cooperation in the field of energy in the Baltic Sea Region;

welcomed the launch of the second three year phase of the EuroFaculty Pskov project on 23 October 2012 to be completed on 31 August 2015 and **noted with satisfaction** that the CBSS Member States are committed to support this project;

commended focus of the Baltic Sea Conference on Education “From Education to Employment: Optimising Transition Management” held on 31 May and 1 June 2012 in Hamburg, Germany on the transition process between education and employment within the Baltic Sea Region and also **recognised the importance** of closer CBSS cooperation with the Baltic University Program and the Baltic Sea Region University Network to elaborate important future cooperation projects in the high education field;

welcomed the outcome of the Joint Meeting of the CBSS Senior Officials Group for Culture and the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture held in Greifswald, Germany on 4 May 2012, **acknowledged the importance** to continue the practice of the joint CBSS SOG and

NDPC meetings in the future and **took into account** the good results of CBSS intergovernmental network in the long term CBSS culture priority area – the Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage in the Baltic Sea States – and encouraged further synergies in cooperation on culture;

supported the strong focus of the CBSS Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk on the rights of the children vulnerable to online sexual abuse and in residential care through systematic training of auditing staff, and disseminating best practices on cooperation between law enforcement and child welfare agencies when children are trafficked for exploitation in begging and criminality; in this connection **welcomed the outcome** of the Conference of the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk “Information Safety of Children in the Modern Media Environment”, held in Moscow, Russia on 27 February 2013, and **emphasized the importance** of children’s right to access information in printed media as well as online;

noted with appreciation the work of the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings in combating all forms of human trafficking in the Region and specifically focusing on increasing the capacity of key labour actors to identify instances of trafficking for labour exploitation, developing strategies to address exploitative labour situations, and raising political awareness as well as **invited** it to initiate the examination of human trafficking for the purpose of the removal of organs, tissues and cells, **noted the significance** of the International Theoretical and Practical Conference on Fighting Human Trafficking in the CBSS Member States, held in Saint Petersburg, Russia, on 15-16 April 2013 and invited TF-THB for a closer cooperation with the CBSS Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk;

expressed support to the high level work of the CBSS Expert Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety based on the highest nuclear safety standards and the on-going and planned work towards enhancing regional capabilities in providing analysis assistance on gamma spectrometric measurement;

acknowledged the importance of the involvement of civil society in the development of the Baltic Sea Region and **welcomed** the XI Baltic Sea NGO Forum, held on 16-17 April 2013 in Saint Petersburg, Russia, with tolerance and cultural diversity in the Region as its main theme;

noted the efforts undertaken by the Russian CBSS Presidency to revitalize youth cooperation in the BSR and in this connection the decision of the XI Baltic Sea NGO Forum to create the Baltic Sea Youth Network;

supported measures aimed at expanding cultural and educational relations, direct people-to-people contacts, including the facilitation of current visa regimes for the citizens of all CBSS Member States while welcoming the progress in the visa dialogue between the EU and Russia pursuing a common goal towards visa free short-term travel for their citizens;

supported the continuation of transnational efforts in the field of civil protection under the auspices of the CBSS and continued regional activities in contingency planning and cross-border rescue services, and in this connection **noted the importance** of the Meeting of Directors General of the Civil Protection Services of the CBSS Member States, held in Vologda, Russia, on 5-6 June 2013;

looked forward to continuing social dialogue within the Baltic Sea Labour Forum with initial focus on sustainable labour markets in the Baltic Sea Region through the social partners' dialogue and on youth employment and mobility of labour according to the BSLF resolution adopted on 15 November 2012 in Hamburg, Germany;

supported the need to strengthen cooperation between the CBSS and the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Cooperation (BSSSC) in youth cooperation, maritime policy, tourism cooperation and other areas of mutual importance;

acknowledged the importance of the close CBSS interaction with the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) to implement tasks set in the Resolution of the 21st Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference "Energy, Ecology and Social Welfare" held on 26-28 August 2012 in Saint Petersburg, Russia. The Russian CBSS Presidency will inform on its activities at the 22nd Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference with the main title "Sustainable Innovation for a Competitive Economy in the Region" to be held on 25-27 August 2013 in Pärnu, Estonia;

expressed its gratitude to the Russian Federation for its 2012 – 2013 Presidency of the CBSS and **welcomed** the Republic of Finland as the incoming Presidency for 2013 – 2014;

decided to hold the 19th Ministerial Session of the CBSS in the Republic of Estonia in 2015.