

# CBSS long-term priorities

## Regional Identity:

- Seminar on Regional Identity in cooperation with the Polish Presidency 2015-2016, Almedalen Political Week, Visby, Gotland, Sweden, 4-5 July 2016
- Continued emphasis on the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference
- Celebrating 25 years of Nordic-Baltic cooperation between independent states. Seminar held in cooperation with the Nordic House, Reykjavik, September 2016
- High-level meeting on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the CBSS, March 2017
- Reinforcing regional identity through cultural events and promoting shared values
- Promoting Icelandic culture in the CBSS Member States

## Sustainable and Prosperous Region:

- Focus on gender equality as a driver for sustainable development, following up on Global Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda
- *Barbershop* events, designed to encourage the engagement of men and boys in the discussion about gender equality
- Developing an Action Plan for Baltic 2030, focusing on the implementation of the UN Global Goals
- International Conference on Bioeconomy: *Minding the future: Bioeconomy in a changing Nordic reality*, Reykjavik, 5-6 October 2016
- Increased emphasis on cooperation with grass-root organizations on sustainable development
- Balticlub - continued emphasis on creative & entrepreneurial collaborations in the region
- Promotion of Science & Innovation on a macro-regional level
- 20th anniversary of sustainable development cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region - Baltic 2030

## Safe and Secure Region:

- Continued focus on children's well-being through the work of the CBSS Expert Group on Children at Risk, (EGCC)
- Increased cooperation and coordination between expert committees, including a joint meeting of the EGCC and the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB), Reykjavik, October 2016
- Expansion of the Promise project; promoting the *Barnabus* model in the Baltic region in cooperation with the EU. *Barnabus* Iceland has already inspired the establishment of around fifty such centres during recent years among the Nordic Countries and elsewhere
- Focus on UNSC Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security
- Diplomatic Training on the prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings.
- Tenth Anniversary of the TF-THB established in 2006 at the 6th Baltic Sea States Summit held in Reykjavik
- Civil Protection Network - emphasis on crisis communication and the capabilities of volunteer organizations for civil protection
- Continued engagement in the Gaps to Caps project, Risk Management Capability Based on Gaps Identification in the BSR, launched in Iceland in 2015
- Cooperation with other regional bodies



## Icelandic Presidency 2016-2017



Photos: Yadid Levy / Norden.org

Equality  
Democracy  
Children

# Celebrating 25 years of cooperation

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The priorities of the Icelandic Presidency are children, equality and democracy, which Iceland believes form the foundation for a shared, sustainable and secure future for the region and its people. These priorities will therefore underpin the CBSS strategies for a stronger regional identity, a prosperous & sustainable region and a safe & secure region.

## Children

Children hold the key to our future and their well-being will be at the heart of the Icelandic Presidency. Upholding children's rights is the obligation of all CBSS states and ensuring their safety and well-being will create a healthier and safer society in the future. The rights of the child is one of the core pillars of the safety and security priority of the CBSS.

Through the CBSS, Iceland will continue to lead initiatives that focus on a holistic approach to protect children from all forms of violence, with particular emphasis on preventing sexual abuse and exploitation, including trafficking. Promotion of child-friendly and multidisciplinary responses to child abuse, preventing re-victimisation and providing comprehensive services to child victims should be the guiding principle of activities in this field.

In light of the current situation in the region, asylum-seeking children and unaccompanied children deserve a special focus. Prioritizing the cooperation among different authorities and across sectors will be crucial in preventing abuse and trafficking of children.



## Equality

Equality and respect for human rights remains a cornerstone of Icelandic foreign policy and is surely a shared vision of the CBSS Member States. From its initiation, the CBSS has had a role to play in promoting human rights in the region and its long-term priorities will only be achieved through further work in this field.

Equal opportunity for all citizens, equal rights and the elimination of any kind of discrimination based on ethnicity, age, gender or other factors, is fundamental to the well-being of all our citizens.

Only through the active participation of both women and men on an equal footing, can we ensure the prosperity and sustainability of the region. This year the CBSS Member States will start implementing the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which all of our leaders have agreed to. Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda aims to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women, which is also a cross-cutting issue throughout the Agenda and its 17 Global Goals.

Gender is also a key factor in ensuring a safe and secure region. Gender-based violence is a persistent problem in all societies and must be addressed in this context. Furthermore, the legal and economic empowerment of women has been shown to lead to more stable and secure societies.

Although a lot of progress has been made, more work is needed. During its Presidency, Iceland will actively work to engage men and boys in the gender equality discussion, as only through the participation of all, can we achieve our goals.



## Democracy

An open, democratic discourse is even more important now, during times of increasing instability. The number of displaced people has not been greater since WWII, terrorist acts threaten citizens in Europe and all over the world, and extremist and xenophobic discourse have become a part of a new political reality in Europe. Such challenges require a firm response in defense of our common values of democracy and human rights, our common humanity. It is the right way to address the difficulties we are confronted with, both within and among states.

The democratic ideal is a founding vision of the CBSS, which some 25 years ago formalized the cooperation of old and newly established democracies in the region. With the oldest parliament in the world, Iceland has a strong democratic tradition. At challenging times, there is a great need for CBSS members to form a dialogue on the importance of upholding democratic values.

In this context, the Icelandic Presidency will explore ideas on direct democracy and other ways to activate people in the decision-making process. It will also highlight how democracy reshaped and made the Baltic Sea area stronger and more peaceful than before.