BSLFmobINIT: New Perspectives through Vocational Mobility

Statement of the Steering Committee
18 November 2015, Gdansk

The BSLF Steering Committee underlines the positive impact of labour mobility on EU economy and innovation and stresses its important role in increasing prosperity and welfare and bringing considerable added value for workers, companies and society through better matching of skills supply and demand, better functioning of the single market and more prosperity.

At the same time, labour mobility causes challenges both for receiving countries as well as for countries of origin. The adoption and implementation of concrete strategies leading to the emergence of new areas of economic activities, modernization and increasing competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region is the response to such challenges.

Due to this background the Baltic Sea Labour Forum (BSLF) is preparing a Flagship Initiative on Mobility of Labour which focuses on three main areas:

1) **Information for employees, employers and relevant institutions** about working conditions, taxation information by relevant institutions, social security, way of life and cultural distinctive character are amongst the most important requirements for mobility of employees. The goal for the initiative is to promote qualitative high value but at the same time understandable information via the internet for employees and employers in the Baltic Sea area.

2) **Fairness in the labour markets** is equally important. It promotes commitment to competitiveness and productivity. Comparable treatment of workers regardless of their country of origin and fair competition between companies based on respect for industrial relations and collective bargaining systems are key elements in creating fair labour markets. The initiative strives to support the transnational cooperation and exchange of experience of the social partners regarding working conditions.

3) **Vocational education, training, lifelong learning** are key words when talking about improving social and economic development in the Baltic Sea Region. It is of the fundamental importance that the workforce has relevant skills and competences, which will enable them to choose freely a workplace. To strengthen youth employment it is important to improve (transnational) vocational orientation, to enable a smooth transition from school to work and to support transnational mobility of the youth. The Initiative on Mobility of Labour is seeking to foster strategic networks in the regions and the exchange of practical experiences to achieve these goals.
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The Baltic Sea Labour Forum

- appreciates the support of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) and the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS);
- calls on Social Partners in the BSR to strengthen Social Dialogue through cooperation in the BSLF in favor of creating new job opportunities through:
  - creating conditions for extention of the implementation of existing best practices related to labour mobility
  - strengthening the support for the development and implementation of social innovations related to labour market
  - increasing the support for the creation of safe and sustained jobs.
- encourages the BSLF member organisations to implement bilateral projects - in the frame of the mobility initiative;
- welcomes the establishment of the European Social Fund (ESF-Network)*1, which strives to promote transitional cooperation of projects in in the fields of education and labour market;
- calls on all BSR member states and regions to support the further development of the BSN-Network in order to support the implementation of the social dimension of the EUSBSR;
- states that the transnational cooperation of projects in the BSR should be possible also for non EU BSR countries.

On behalf of the Baltic Sea Labour Forum,

Dr. Nico Fickinger, General Manager of Nordmetall, the employers association of the metal and electronics industry, Germany

Jan Lundin, Director General of the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat

Mieczysław Jurek, Chairman of NSZZ „Solidarność” Westpomerania, Poland

Uwe Polkaehn, President of the Confederation of German Trade Unions Northern Region (DGB-Nord), Germany

Franz Thönnes, Member of Parliament, former Parliamentary State Secretary, Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Member of the Standing Committee of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference

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* The network involves ESF managing authorities and implementing bodies from the member states and regions: Åland Islands, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Land of Hamburg, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.
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The BSLF consist 28 organisations- representing trade unions and employers associations as well as the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Secretariat (BSPC) and the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat (CBSS). It was established in November 2011 and wants to promote well-functioning labour markets in the BSR in order to contribute to the attractiveness of the region for living and working and to support the economic growth in the BSR: www.bslf.eu

The Secretariat of the BSLF is placed for an initial period at the premises of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Secretariat in Stockholm, Sweden: www.cbss.org/bslf