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
• Balticlab - 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 Barnahus model in the Baltic region in cooperation with the EU. Barnahus Iceland has already established 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

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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.