



Director General's Statement

World Science Day for Peace and Development 2018: Science, a Human Right **Science in the Baltic Sea Region as a Public Good**

In view of the forthcoming Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) discussions on science, research and higher education in Riga in February 2019, the World Science Day for Peace and Development is a good timing to review the joint position reached less than three years ago in Kraków.

[“Baltic Science: Renewing the Commitment to Science/Research Joint Actions in the Baltic Sea Region”](#) expresses the “commitment to cooperate in order to ensure a prosperous, sustainable and competitive region based on front running research and higher education activities as “a common good””. This section of the Kraków Conclusions was highlighted also to the attendants of the third [Digital Infrastructures for Research \(DI4R2018\) conference](#) held last month in Lisbon.

The reason why I quote the CBSS document is its adherence to the thematic highlights of this year's celebrations of the World Science Day for Peace and Development 2018. The view, shared among the CBSS Member States of science being a common good, echoes the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific advancement enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I should also stress that the reference to the third Digital Infrastructures for Research conference is not accidental since this event helped to shed more light on the on-going European discussions about Open Science, a thematic strand also noted by [Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO](#), in her Statement regarding the World Science Day for Peace and Development 2018.

Moreover, the celebratory occasion is a window of opportunity not only to look back at the recent events but also to explore the duality of research progress. Two facets of disruption are well captured in one of the latest publications of the European Political Strategy Centre [“State of the Union 2018: Our Destiny In Our Hands”](#): “In some fields, such as health and science, it triggers enthusiasm, optimism and hope for the breakthroughs that may be achieved. In other fields, like politics and labour markets, it breeds uncertainty, pessimism and even fear. Many Europeans are today worried about a perceived future in which technological breakthroughs will make them redundant, where social welfare systems will be strained to the limit under the weight of an increasingly ageing population, and competition for jobs will be made even tougher with the arrival of more migrants.” These reflections tap in the very duality of the work and future legacies to be left by the support measures to be implemented by the members of [Baltic Science Network](#).

On the one hand, Baltic Science Network offered support will help to advance the research and science potential of the Baltic Sea Region through tailored opportunities offered to a limited set of researchers who have devoted their careers to the photon & neutron science, life



sciences and welfare state studies. The decisions made by Baltic Science Network members ahead of the Closing Conference to be held in February 2019 in Riga will help to further promote the research potential and scientific competitiveness of the macro-region.

On the other hand, Baltic Science Network members should bear in mind that many of its offered support measures, especially in photon & neutron science and life sciences hold a potential to further contribute to the technological disruption, which, as depicted by the quote from the publication of the European Political Strategy Centre, does not always resonate among wider audiences in the most positive of ways. Therefore, the welfare state strand of Baltic Science Network proves its essential role in addressing the persisting or emerging challenges faced by people across the Baltic Sea Region.

In the context of the forthcoming CBSS Baltic Sea Science Day 2019 to be held in Riga in February 2019, it is the right time to point out that the CBSS long-term priority “Sustainable and Prosperous Region” should continue bridging the two sides of the research progress. Universities hosted by the Baltic Sea Region are playing and should continue playing a vital role in addressing this task.