

# The 24<sup>th</sup> Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference

30<sup>th</sup> August - 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 in Rostock, Germany  
– BSPC in a Nutshell –



## Baltic Sea Region – A Role Model for Innovation in Social- and Healthcare

The 24<sup>th</sup> Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference took place in Rostock-Warnemünde. Around 180 delegates met in the Yachting & Spa Resort, Hohe Düne, right on the edge of the Baltic Sea. The aim of the conference was to pass a resolution on the Baltic Sea Region as a role model for innovation in social and healthcare.

The participants arrived on Saturday and the BSPC Drafting Committee and the BSPC Standing Committee held their first sessions on Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> August. Parallel sessions were organized by the NDPHS secretariat on health. In the afternoon, a guided har-

bour and city tour as well as a reception at the town hall provided the participants with insight into the cultural wealth and architecture characteristics of this part of Germany. A reception hosted by Mr Erwin Sellering, Prime Minister of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, closed the first day.

On Monday, three sessions took place that focused on cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, on cross-border cooperation in healthcare and on health and economy. In the evening, a prize-winner of the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, Martynas and the Sin-Chronic Quartet, gave an impressive

„Accordion meets string quartet” performance in the Boat House.

On Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> September, Ms Sylvia Bretschneider, BSPC Chair and President of the Landtag Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, gave a commemorative address on the beginning of the 2nd World War. Ms Manuela Schwesig, Federal Minister for Families, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, held a keynote speech to open the fourth session and this was followed by a roundtable discussion. The final version of the resolution was adopted at the closing of the conference.



## Extracts from the Welcoming Speech given by Mr Erwin Sellering, Prime Minister of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

„I bid you all a very warm welcome to Rostock-Warnemünde, here in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. I am very pleased to be able to welcome so many prominent guests from all Baltic Sea countries, along with representatives from Iceland and Norway and observers from other countries such as Hungary and Turkey.



*Mr Erwin Sellering, Prime Minister of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Ms Sylvia Bretschneider, President of the Landtag Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Ms Rimantė Šalāševičiūtė, Minister for Health from Lithuania*

2015 is a very special year for us here in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern: this year we are celebrating 25 years of German unity and 25 years of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. And we can proudly say that we have made really good progress in these 25 years.

We have achieved a lot since 1990: our towns and villages shine in new splendour; we have a modern infrastructure; and we have developed very well – especially from an economic point of view. In the meantime, we have become strong in many industries: in tourism in any event – this federal state is simply beautiful – as well as in the food industry, in the health sector and in renewable energies. The unemployment figure is at its lowest level since German reunification; the number of

social insurance contributions has increased. All this is the result of an unprecedented construction process. A great achievement of the people in our state, to whom I, as Prime Minister, am very grateful and of whom the people here with us in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern can rightly be proud.

From the outset, good cooperation with our neighbours around the Baltic Sea has always been one of the major political and economic prospects for us

in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and a priority in the work of the state government. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has, therefore, taken an active role in the co-operation of the Baltic Sea states from the very beginning. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern works with the Council of the Baltic Sea States, in cooperation with the sub-regions, in the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions and also in the Baltic Commission.

In the last 20 years, we have developed many good contacts with our neighbours in the Baltic region, contacts between schools, universities, businesses and chambers, between cities and towns, in the fields of sports and culture. We have close partnerships with regions in Sweden, Finland and Poland, with good economic cooperation, especially in the port industries and logistics, in the tourism and health-care industries.

However, the Baltic region offers its residents not only economic opportunities. Our co-operation is also an excellent example of living European integration, of an intensive exchange in peace and freedom.”



*Opening of the Conference: Ms Sylvia Bretschneider, Chair of the BSPC, Mr Bodo Bahr, Head of BSPC Secretariat, Mr Armin Tebben, Director of the Landtag Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Vice-Chair of the BSPC Prof. Dr. Jānis Vucāns*

# Harbour Tour and Guided Tour of Rostock Old Town

Hanseatic city and a seaside resort



On Sunday afternoon, there was a boat trip from the conference venue, Hohe Düne. The delegates were taken around the harbour to see the moles, lighthouses and enormous ships and cruise liners. The sail along the Warnow provided a splendid view of the German Baltic coastline and the Hanseatic town of Rostock.

President of the Bürgerschaft, welcomed the BSPC delegates to the historic town hall of Rostock famous for its seven towers. In a welcome address, **Mr Jochen Schulte**, Member of the Landtag Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, stressed the importance of cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region as all the partners shared similar societal challenges. A guided city tour provided insight into the historical background of the Hanseatic town and was an opportunity for

delegates to have a look at some of the large churches, towers, city gates, gabled houses, warehouses and many examples of northern German Brick Gothic architecture.

During a reception and on behalf of the Lord Mayor, **Dr Wolfgang Nitzsche**,

„Health is wealth and wealth is health”



*During the conference parallel sessions of the **Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS)** were organized by the NDPHS secretariat. A number of parliamentarians took part in the meetings and received an overview of the very strong association between health and the economy and other policy areas.*



**Mr Jochen Schulte**, Member of the Landtag Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, addressed the delegates in the Town Hall of Rostock and underlined the town’s role as Mecklenburg-Vorpommern’s gateway to the Baltic Sea and the neighboring regions.



## Opening Words

by Ms Sylvia Bretschneider, Chair of the BSPPC



„It is my distinct honor to welcome you to Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, host of the 24<sup>th</sup> Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. Again I would like to thank our Prime Minister for the excellent reception yesterday.

I am very happy to see so many familiar faces today and I look forward to our discussions both in the plenary and in the Drafting Committee, today and tomorrow. [...]

We have come together in the most northern tip of the city of Rostock. I am very pleased that we managed to hold our conference here. It is the perfect location for a conference that brings together parliamentarians from all around the Baltic Sea. Surely, we couldn't be any closer to the

sea that connects our countries. In this sense I hope for a constructive conference that is held in the spirit of friendship and harmony. We are all gathered here to work together on challenges we more or less all share. And we are here to think about joint strategies to tackle these challenges.

The conference is titled „Baltic Sea Region – A Role Model for Innovation in Social- and Healthcare“. In the social- and healthcare sector, there are many challenges: an ageing population, inequalities in healthcare, an increase in lifestyle-related diseases, financial pressure on the service systems and others.

In a number of sessions we will discuss these challenges from different perspectives. We will also highlight how innovation can help to cope with these challenges. The Baltic Sea Region possesses profound knowledge in this area. It should be our ambition to establish the Baltic Sea Region as a role model for innovation in this field. I think that the combination of our different traditions and experiences, while

featuring very similar problems at the same time, will help us to this end. [...]

I am looking forward to our discussions and which demands we will formulate for our governments. I am pleased that the draft resolution also contains many concrete ideas for future joint initiatives in the area of Innovation in Social- and Healthcare. Our work on this important field shouldn't end with this conference. It should be the starting point of a much deeper and more concrete cooperation in this field, which is so important for all the people in our countries. It should be supported by joint initiatives and be followed up on a regular basis.

I wish us all a very successful conference and that we will continue to increase public awareness and prepare joint opinions on current issues in the Baltic Sea Region. I am confident that we will – and I am now honored to yield the floor to the Prime Minister of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Mr Erwin Sellering.”





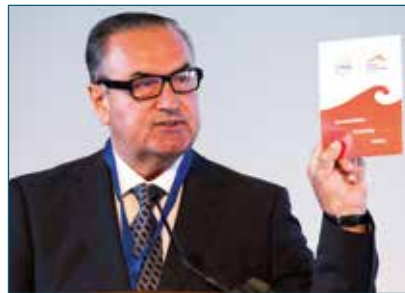
## FIRST SESSION

### Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region

*Chair – Mr Ryszard Górecki, MP, Poland*  
*Vice-Chair – Ms Giedrė Purvaneckienė, MP, Lithuania*



*Mr Raul Mälik*



*Mr Michał Czyż*



*Mr Jørn Dohrmann*

*The first session of the conference introduced the „Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region”. The session was chaired by **Mr Ryszard Górecki**, Member of Parliament from Poland, and **Ms Giedrė Purvaneckienė**, Member of Parliament from Lithuania as vice-chair.*

Starting off in this first session **Ms Sylvia Bretschneider** reported from the BSPC Chair. Following this **Mr Raul Mälik**, Ambassador of Estonia and outgoing chair of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), informed the delegates on activities. **Mr Michał Czyż**, Amba-

sador of Poland and Current CBSS Chair, presented an update on the priorities of the Polish CBSS Presidency stressing sustainability, creativity and safety.

**Mr Jørn Dohrmann**, Member of the European Parliament, presented information on the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), its external aspects, health cooperation and on the Northern Dimension policy.

**Ms Valentina Pivnenko**, Member of the Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in-

formed the participants about the strategy of socio-economic development of the North-West Federal District.

**Mr Harry Liiv**, Chair of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) gave a report on the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan regarding the protection of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea Area.

**Ms Daria Akhutina**, General Director, reported from the Baltic Sea NGO Forum and Network.



*Ms Valentina Pivnenko*



*Mr Harry Liiv*



*Ms Daria Akhutina*



## SECOND SESSION

### Cross-border Cooperation in Healthcare

*Chair – Ms Valentina Pivnenko, MP, Russian Federation*  
*Vice-Chair – Mr Franz Thönnnes, MP, Germany*



*Ms Rimantė Šalaševičiūtė*



*Mr Dmitry Kostennikov*



*Ms Annette Widmann-Mauz*

*The second session was chaired by Ms Valentina Pivnenko, Member of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, and Mr Franz Thönnnes, Member of Parliament from Germany, as vice-chair. The speakers presented their views and statements on „Cross-border Cooperation in Healthcare“.*

**Ms Rimantė Šalaševičiūtė**, Minister for Health from Lithuania, highlighted possibilities for cross-border cooperations.

**Mr Dmitry Kostennikov**, Vice-Minister for Health and State-Secretary, Russia informed the participants about Russian cooperations.

**Ms Annette Widmann-Mauz**, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Health, Germany, reported on initiatives taking place in the Northern Region.

**Dr. Nedret Emiroglu**, Deputy Director of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, gave an overview of the MDGs in working towards the new European policy for health in support of national health policies and strategies.

**Mr Bo Könberg**, former Minister for Health from Sweden and author of the report „The Future Nordic-Co-operation on Health“ reported on how the Nordic cooperation in the health field can be developed in the next 5-10 years.



*Dr. Nedret Emiroglu*



*Mr Bo Könberg*







## THIRD SESSION

### Health & Economy – Paving the Way for Innovation in Social- and Healthcare

*Chair – Mr Piry Niemi, MP, Sweden, Nordic Council  
Vice-Chair – Mr Jörgen Petterson, Member of Parliament from Åland Islands*



*Mr Günther Oettinger*



*Prof. Dr. Dr. Horst Klinkmann*



*Dr. Jaanus Pikani*

*The chair of the third session was **Mr Piry Niemi**, Member of Parliament from Sweden, and the vice-chair was **Mr Jörgen Petterson**, Member of Parliament from Åland Islands. The discussion evolved around “Health & Economy – Paving the Way for Innovation in Social and Healthcare”.*

**Mr Günther Oettinger**, European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, presented the latest development on eHealth in a European dimension.

**Prof. Dr. Dr. Horst Klinkmann**, President of BioCon Valley, explained the role of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern as a leading health region in the context of life sciences and health economy.

**Dr. Jaanus Pikani**, Vice-President of ScanBalt, described the Baltic Sea Region as a test site for the development of health care products and services with the goal of turning Northern Europe into a globally competitive BioRegion.

**Dr. Dennis A. Ostwald** from WifOR, an independent economic research institute, presented an overview of the economic footprints of the healthcare sector in the Baltic Sea Region and of health economics.

**Prof. Dr. Martin Mielke**, Head of the Department of Infectious Diseases at the Robert Koch Institute, reported on battling the spread of multi-resistant bacteria.



*Dr. Dennis A. Ostwald*



*Prof. Dr. Martin Mielke*







## Martynas and the SinChronic Quartet – „Accordion meets string quartet”



Martynas Levickis, the Lithuanian accordion virtuoso and prizewinner of the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival and SinChronic, the string quartet, gave a stunning performance on Monday evening in the Boat House. The ensemble transported the audience on a colourful musical journey, their diverse repertoire evolving from splendid baroque pieces to the hits of today's pop music. The group is comprised of Giedrė Žarėnaitė (Violin), Simas Tankevičius (Violin), Mintautas Kriščiūnas (Viola) and Ignė Pikalavičiūtė (Violoncello).



## FOURTH SESSION

### Sustainable and Accessible Social and Healthcare - At the Crossroads of Healthcare Provision, the Demographic Shift and Shrinking Budgets.

*Chair – Mr Per Rune Henriksen, MP, Norway*  
*Vice-Chair – Ms Carola Veit, President of the Hamburg Parliament*

*The fourth session was chaired by Mr Per Rune Henriksen, Member of the Norwegian Parliament and Ms Carola Veit, President of the Hamburg Parliament.*

*Ms Sylvia Bretschneider, Chair of the BSPC and President of the Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern started the day with a commemorating speech on 1 September 1939*

*followed by a keynote speech by Ms Manuela Schwesig, Federal Minister for Families, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, on “Demographic Challenges and Care”.*

*In a moving speech the Chairman of the BSPC, Sylvia Bretschneider, commemorated the 60 million victims of World War II at the beginning of the BSPC plenary on 1 September. Following the speech, Ms Bretschneider led the other delegates in song, beginning “We shall overcome” and finished with the third verse “We shall live in peace”, followed by a minute of silence by all participants.*

## Extracts from the Speech Commemorating the Start of World War II on 1 September 1939

“1 September is the day which makes us pause and remember the horrors of war, which still deeply shocks us to this day. [...] 76 years after World War II was provoked by the German National Socialists and 70 years after its end, which did not immediately bring justice, freedom and self-determination for all, it is clearer than ever before that all of us are still facing a challenge in society: to keep up awareness of the crimes, committed by Germany’s National Socialists, to learn from our history, and most importantly to let it guide our political and social actions. [...] For all of us here today, the Baltic Sea – where the first shots were fired which led to World War II – is what connects us. We have come together despite differences in our



historical responsibilities and in our political, economic and social interests. Our declared goal is to ensure that the Baltic Sea remains a sea of peace. We can and will achieve this goal by promoting our common identity, while respecting national self-determination, independence and human rights. However, we will only be able to achieve this if we engage with each other in discussions and if we work together to find solutions. While we may be

tough in the discussions, we should always be fair, focusing on what we have in common. Honoured participants of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, let us jointly seek answers to the questions we are concerned about. Let us continue to work together in learning from history, which is not merely a chapter of the past. We bear special responsibility – in particular as members of parliament, as democratically elected representatives of the people in our countries – to ensure that we live in real peace in our own countries and with our neighbours. We bear responsibility for the dignity of all human beings and for preserving the memory of those who suffered then. Please rise and observe a moment of silence for all the victims of World War II.”



## Extracts from the Keynote Speech on „Demographic Challenges and Care”

given by Ms Manuela Schwesig, Federal Minister for Families,  
Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

„[...] The conference subject this year is the effects of demographic change in the Baltic Sea Region. Dealing with population growth is one of the biggest domestic political challenges in Germany, even if we are happy about the last measured increase in the birth rate.

[...] This conference here in Rostock is an excellent opportunity for collecting the various experiences of this common challenge in the countries and regions and to discuss new ideas. I thank you for the invitation! The second big political challenge that cannot be seen in isolation from demographic change is human interaction with the big number of refugees. [...] My question is: Can the North help? Can the Baltic Sea Region, for example, be a new homeland for a number of the refugees? The answer must be a clear YES. We must distribute the responsibility for refugees more fairly. [...]

Recently I presented a law to improve the conditions for young unaccompanied refugees in Germany.



In this connection the head of the social department of an administrative district in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has said: „We are ready to take in more young refugees. These young people provide us with an opportunity.” [...] In my opinion, this is not only a human but also a far-sighted and strategical point of view. The refugees are not only a burden. They can also be a benefit if the problem or situation is properly handled. [...] In Germany two thirds of all the people who depend on care are taken care of in their own households – one third exclusively by members of the family. We want to support them. First of all, we have

introduced legislation that entitles all employees to take 10 days leave without a reduction in their wages. It is clear that these 10 days are not adequate for the care of the care recipient – the father or mother. But it gives the person time to become informed about other possibilities for care and to organise support. A person that is fostering, must not lose his or her job. Therefore we encourage employees to reduce the number of hours worked per week for two years to have more time for a family member in need of care. To compensate the loss of income in that time we offer a loan with no interest. Beyond the two years another family member may resume nurture. [...] A large part of the effects of the demographic change is borne by the families. This is a wonderful achievement on the part of families. And my aim is to strengthen the families, while we help them to keep a balance between care, family and their occupation.”

(Check against delivery)

Ms **Olaug Bollestad**, Member of Parliament from Norway, Chair of



*Ms Olaug Bollestad*

the BSPC Working Group on Innovation in Social and Healthcare



*Ms Madara Muižniece and Maximilian Priebe,*

presented a detailed report about the result of two years work.

**Ms Madara Muižniece** and **Mr Maximilian Priebe**, Representatives from the 24th BSPC back-to-back event “Kiel Week Youth Forum on Innovation in Social- and Healthcare” reported on the discussions of the young participants and the recommendations of the young people.



These presentations were followed by a roundtable discussion moderated by **Ms Susanne Kluge**, Television Presenter and Medical Journalist with **Ms Olaug Bollesstad**, Member of Parliament from Norway, Chairman of the BSPC Working Group on Innovation in Social and Healthcare;

**Mr Jörg Heydorn**, Member of Parliament, Chairman of the Study Commission on Ageing in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern; **Ms Riitta Työläjärvi**, Senior Advisor Health and Social Policy, Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees STTK; **Mr Björn Ekman**, PhD, Researcher,

Health Economics Division of Social Medicine and Global Health (SMGH), Department of Clinical Sciences, Lund University and **Prof. Dr Marek Zygmunt**, Supervisory Board of BioCon Valley as participants and a vivid discussion of parliamentarians.



*Ms Annette Holmberg-Jansson, Åland Parliament*



*Ms Jette, Waldinger-Thiering, Landtag Schleswig-Holstein*



*Mr Veiko Spolītis, Member of Parliament of Latvia*



*Ms Silke Gajek, Landtag Mecklenburg-Vorpommern*

## CLOSING OF THE 24<sup>th</sup> BSPC

### Closing Words by Ms Sylvia Bretschneider, Chair of the BSPC

Thank you everyone for your great work during this conference, as well as during this past year. The resolution of the 24th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference is adopted. I hope that the contents of this resolution will be acted on by our governments, ministries and other institutions around the Baltic Sea.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, It has been a true honor to be your BSPC Chairman. And now I'm very much looking forward to follow a good BSPC tradition to

pass the baton over to the incoming Chairman, our colleague Jānis Vucāns. But before I do this, I would like to express that I am very, very proud of my staff. (Applause).

They worked very hard, they did a very, very good job.

Not only our Secretary Bodo Bahr, who is working with the conference for a very long time, but also the staff off my parliament, with the director Mr. Armin Tebben, the chief of the parliament staff, who organized everything during the year and made

everything possible together with all our colleagues. Thank you very much.

And now let's do the last step. Jānis, would you please come forward to receive the baton of the BSPC chairman?

Dear Jānis, I hand it over to you. I wish you all the best and I am sure, the next conference will be a successful one as well.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, it is time for our new Chairman to take over and to address us.

Please Jānis, you have the floor.





## Speech by Professor Dr. Jānis Vucāns, incoming Chairman of the BSPC on the occasion of the transfer of the Chairmanship of the BSPC

Honourable Chairman of the BSPC, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen

First of all, I would like to congratulate our German friends and especially the Landtag Mecklenburg-Vorpommern as they conclude their presidency of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. You addressed many important issues which will promote welfare, competitiveness and prosperity of the Region.

Dear Sylvia, you devoted yourself to the parliamentary cooperation of the Baltic Sea Region not only during the presidency. We all know that you have been the captain of the Baltic Sea cooperation for many, many years. We truly appreciate your contribution to strengthening the cooperation of the countries around our Mare Nostrum.

Today, Latvia takes over the presidency of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. To assume the duties of the Chairman is an enormous challenge and a great honour for me. On behalf of the Latvian parliament and the Latvian delegation, I would like to attest that we will perform our duties very responsibly because we are committed to improve the quality of the Baltic Sea and ensure sustainability of the Region. 25 years after the Fall of the Iron Curtain, and the first conference of the Baltic Sea parliamentarians in Helsinki, we are very proud to be the hosts of the Silver Jubilee of the BSPC. The baton has now passed on from Rostock to its sister city Riga. Even though these two cities may be far apart, they are connected by our common home, the Baltic Sea, and by the Hanseatic League heritage.

Traditionally, the BSPC has dealt with economic and environmental issues; with this year's conference and the top-

ic of the Working Group on Innovation in Social- and Healthcare we had quite a novel item on our agenda.

The Baltic Sea Region faces longterm challenges and problems, and the BSPC together with other regional institutions must strive to protect citizens' interests by promoting their welfare, safety and competitiveness. Inhabitants of the Baltic Sea region are interested in having a secure, predictable and growing political, economic, social and cultural environment. Therefore during the Latvian Presidency we would like to focus our common work on the issue which is a fundamental cornerstone for the wellbeing of the region - Education and Labour Market Policy. We believe it is important to look for political answers to the following questions: How to ensure effective correlation between the labour market and education sector? What policy measures should be taken to promote investment in skills and training of workers? How to deal with youth unemployment and the mobility of the labour force?

I am glad that after all the discussions we had in our Standing committee meetings about the next Working group we reached the decision that the next two years we will have a Working Group on the issue of Sustainable Tourism with a set of sub-focusses, including maritime spatial planning a central pillar. Sylvia Bretschneider agreed to lead this Working Group and I am very happy about that. It is important that the BSPC addresses concrete issues of Sustainable Tourism, and continues to move from the general idea, that cooperation is important, to concrete projects of mutual interest, where cooperation can give real improvements. This has been the BSPC's goal all along, and the Latvian

Presidency will continue to make good on this promise. I also underline this point because I believe that the BSPC is a unique forum that has an even greater significance in the current situation, which is no longer as stress-free, as before. The disagreement between most part of western countries and Russia in a number of regional cooperation directions cannot be denied and ignored.

What sets the BSPC apart from other platforms is the fact that we still uphold the banner of cooperation, without turning a blind eye to differences in opinions that we could also witness during this conference. I believe that we must continue our work, if we want to live in peace and maintain a good neighbourhood. I am glad that we have once again proven that we are capable of working together. And I am proud that Riga will be the host city of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, 25 years after East and West had overcome confrontation. In this spirit I hope that we will contribute to making the region more secure and prosperous. Our main goal as elected representatives of our countries was and still is: to keep up the dialogue, to conduct an active peace policy, to establish the Baltic Sea as a Sea of Peace.

Dear Ms Carola Veit, the President of the Hamburg Parliament, I want to congratulate you for becoming the Vice President of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference for the next year, and I hope on our successful cooperation.

Finally, I would like also to thank everybody who took part in the work of our conference and made it so successful. Thank you very much for your attention, and see you next year in Latvia, in Riga!



## Drafting Committee

*The BSPC Drafting Committee was responsible for developing the political recommendations of the annual parliamentary conference during the three-day consultation.*

*(The conference report, the speeches and the presentations will be available on <http://www.bspc.net/>)*

## Conference Resolution

### Adopted by the 24th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)

The participants, elected representatives from the Baltic Sea Region States\*, assembling in Rostock, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, 30 August – 1 September 2015,

welcome, against the background of the crisis in Ukraine, the agreements concluded in Minsk, which may lead to a peaceful solution of the conflict, and insist on their thorough and unwavering implementation and appeal

to the parties to provide comprehensive support to the work of the OSCE;

expect all Baltic Sea States to make every effort to ensure that the Baltic Sea region will continue to be a region of intensive co-operation and good, peaceful neighbourliness. To this end, they will use all the opportunities of parliamentary, governmental and social exchange and dialogue. For this reason, they also call for a resumption

of the ministerial meetings of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS). This will foster the dialogue and strengthen cooperation;

discussing Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, Cross-Border Cooperation in Health Care, Health and Economy – Paving the Way for Innovation in Social and Health Care, and Sustainable and Accessible Social and Health Care – at the Crossroads of Health Care Provision, the Demographic Shift and Shrinking Budgets;

reiterating their support for the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), welcoming the new long-term priorities of the CBSS, as well as the efforts of the Polish CBSS Presidency to improve coherence in Baltic Sea regional cooperation, and acknowledging the progress and achievements of CBSS in fields such as sustainable economic growth, clean shipping, labour market



\*Parliaments of

Denmark, Estonia, Europe, Finland, Federal Republic of Germany, Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, Iceland, Latvia, Leningrad Region, Lithuania, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Norway, Poland, City of St. Petersburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Sweden, Åland Islands, Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Baltic Assembly, Nordic Council



mobility, research and development, transport and communications, cultural heritage, trafficking in human beings, and civil security, and support the CBSS practical approach to the implementation of the new CBSS long term priorities;

expressing against the background of the current situation their solidarity with the refugees which are forced to flee their homelands, being aware of the big challenge to secure a safe residence;

call on the governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the European Union (EU);

to ensure the decent treatment of the refugees especially concerning housing and healthcare;

#### **Regarding Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, to**

1. strengthen the cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region including the Northern Dimension and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and other regional actors for a stable foundation of relations and encourage further development of the structural dialogue and cooperation between each and every regional organization and format leading to creation of a common Baltic cooperation space;
2. support any cooperation that marks the Baltic Sea Region as a model region with equal access to health for all and with a special obligation to support the dissemination and development of health and well-being by playing a key role in the realization of the new sustainable development goals of the United Nations;
3. reaffirm the pursuit of the entire region to co-operation aimed at becoming a role model region with a sustain-

able economy, capable of boosting competitiveness and opening up new opportunities for business and employment;

4. co-operate in order to strengthen the Baltic Sea Region as an important competitive knowledge region with an excellent higher education and research infrastructure;

5. encourage co-operation in the fields where mutual benefits and synergies e.g. between the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the Strategy for the socio-economic development of the North-West Federal district of Russia can only be achieved by identifying common priorities and by developing respective regional strategies and action plans;

6. evaluate the effects and promote the extension of the new regulations on SECA (Sulphur Emission Control Area), in force since 1 January 2015, to other sea basins, including outside of the EU, and support efficient enforcement of these regulations on ships, regardless of which flag they might fly, to ensure the improvement of the environment, human health and to secure the competitiveness of the shipping sector in the region;

7. promote close cooperation between cruise operators, ports and other coastal tourism stakeholders such as in the recently launched Pan-European Cruise Dialogue and actively participate in transnational projects to unlock the full potential for sustainable blue growth in the maritime and coastal tourism sectors;

8. continue work to upgrade reception facilities for sewage in passenger ports to ensure a timely activation of the special area status of the Baltic Sea under Marpol Annex IV of the International Maritime Organization, with the aim to hinder the release of untreated sewage from passenger ships in

the future and to reaffirm the commitment for the continued improvement and modernization of the waste water treatment capacity throughout the entire Baltic Sea Region, in compliance with the stricter threshold values agreed by HELCOM;

9. enhance macro-regional capacity to respond to major emergencies based on all-hazards approach and joint, cross-border preparations to protect lives, health and wellbeing of citizens;

10. strengthen and further develop HELCOM as the main coordinating body in the effort to protect the Baltic marine environment, and to strongly support the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), and to stress the importance of BSAP as the environmental pillar of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region;

11. deepen the political exchange among young people in the Baltic Sea Region and to support the permanent establishment of a Baltic Sea Youth Forum;

12. support the Nordic Bioeconomy Initiative by the Nordic Council of Ministers;

#### **Regarding Cross-border Co-operation in Health Care, to**

13. expand, strengthen and deepen cross-border cooperation in social and health care and the strategic planning of health services and continue with strong effort the development of a "Baltic Sea Health Region", to decrease inequality and lift the general welfare as a common challenge all Baltic Sea Region Countries face;

14. support the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing (NDPHS) as a highly valued and innovative regional network, significantly contributing to the improvement of peoples' health and

social wellbeing in the Northern Dimension area, the new NDPHS Strategy 2020 and its Action Plan, as well as the Policy Area “Health” of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region;

15. support the EU’s cross-border co-operation programmes and other relevant programmes as tools contributing to strengthening cross-border and regional co-operation in health care in the Baltic Sea Region;

16. launch and develop concrete transnational health care and social wellbeing initiatives, such as ScanBalt or the WHO’s Healthy Cities project and to foster the development of the Baltic Sea Health Region by further strategies and transnational projects, e.g. by a joint antibiotics strategy, by connecting the fields of health, tourism, information and communications technology (ICT) and natural resources;

17. spread innovative and best practices throughout the Baltic Sea Region so to become a model region in health care;

18. co-operate on research and sustainable strategies for promotion of cultivation and production of healthy and organic food;

19. make workplaces safer and healthier and thus more productive and recognize the important work of trade unions to promote a culture of risk prevention to improve working conditions throughout the region;

20. improve transnational cooperation and medical specialization in the treatment of rare diseases, bearing in mind the cost-effective usage of medical equipment;

21. regulate transnational emergency care in a way that the fastest possible healthcare provision can be guaranteed regardless of the healthcare providers’ country of origin;

22. intensify exchanges of experience and co-operation with the aim of fighting antimicrobial resistance as one of the main global challenges in health care, to implement research in this area, and support and intensify all efforts to develop and implement a global action plan on antimicrobial resistance by WHO;

23. reduce the usage of antibiotics – general – and for agriculture (livestock farming) to an absolute minimum in order to prevent further increase of antimicrobial resistance;

24. strive to introduce the same standards on a high level in the treatment of contagious infectious diseases throughout the Baltic Sea Region;

25. broaden the scope of the Könberg report to the entire Baltic Sea Region, in order to gain a comparable overview of the status of health and care in the Baltic Sea Region;

26. commission a regular report on the status of health including disaggregated data and analysis for different population groups such as children, youth and senior citizens and particularly marginalized groups in the countries of the Baltic Sea Region, in order to coordinate issues, definitions and emphases as a step forward in terms of comparability of different systems within the region and map commonly shared challenges ahead;

#### **Regarding Health and Economy, to**

27. appreciate that, whereas economic prosperity is good for health, good health outcomes also favour economic growth and development. To that end, recognize the importance of health and social wellbeing for the economy and other policy areas and vice versa and consider health aspects in all policies;

28. improve support for the development of innovations in health care in order to prevent a brain drain;

29. support the ScanBalt Strategy 2015-2018 and use synergies with existing strategies;

30. develop measures to improve the situation of the medical and care professions through – for example - eHealth;

31. improve conditions to support the development of innovations in health care, including in the fields of eHealth and telemedicine, whilst ensuring that investments in eHealth support the adoption of standards and drive interoperability across the health sector to leverage the „eHealth European Interoperability Framework (eEIF)” and observe the joint European initiatives, such as the “Guidelines under eHealth Network” of the responsible member state authorities;

32. further strengthen measures for collaborative implementation of a joint eHealth Innovation ecosystem based on a Baltic Sea Region cooperation platform for eHealth initiatives built on smart specialization and mobilize regional resources based on already existing structures and internationally recognized standards;

33. improve the conditions to include eHealth and telemedicine in the standard care;

34. improve early intervention to strengthen good public health through social investment such as vaccine programs, and take strong measures to reduce consumption of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs, and work towards stronger prevention of diabetes II and other lifestyle illnesses;

35. support the usage of cost-reducing methods for better quality of life, including cultural and physical health-related activities in treatment;



36. improve the national labelling relevant for a healthy lifestyle including labelling accessible to different population groups such as child-sensitive and child-specific labelling;

37. foster development of health-related services within the tourism strategies of the Baltic Sea Region countries;

38. ensure global comparability of health economy and measure the performance and the impact of the health care systems via economic growth and employment by establishing a first reliable transnational method like “economic footprint of health economy”;

39. check the possibility to establish a “Baltic Health Forum”, to ensure and improve a sustainable exchange and networking in this policy field around the Baltic Sea;

#### **Regarding Sustainable and Accessible Social and Health Care, to**

40. ensure affordable health care for everyone and emphasize the focus on the needs of patients with due regard to age and gender and to warrant equal and affordable access to high-quality health services throughout the whole Baltic Sea Region;

41. ensure that a positive economic development in the region promotes high standards in health care and social wellbeing;

42. take strong measures to ensure equitable availability, access and use of social welfare and health care services, e.g. between urban and rural areas, between socio-economic groups and with due regard to age and gender;

43. develop and strengthen strategies addressing demographic change, such as the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy

Ageing and especially considering public services with regard to rural peripheral areas;

44. install geriatric health care centres and modify social rehabilitation centres to ensure health care in rural areas as well as improving age-appropriate medicine;

45. ensure integrated services for children consolidating health care and social care services in a child-sensitive way;

46. ensure support services for families, pregnant women and prospective parents in support of families and parenthood, provide an integrated package of services to families with children in order to encourage childbirth, childcare and child rearing with a view to counteracting the current demographic trends and investing in families and fostering child-friendly communities and societies;

47. encourage patient responsibility for people living in the Baltic Sea Region;

48. raise awareness especially amongst the youth in a healthier lifestyle and to work on making education in healthy lifestyle mandatory in all schools and all school levels, a database on best practice examples on how to improve education and awareness should be created;

49. carry out studies with the aim of developing prevention strategies in health care, such as the North-Trøndelag Health Study (HUNT);

50. establish a first aid system for mental health problems as the recognition, awareness and diagnostic of mental problems are still underdeveloped;

51. support activities on Non-Governmental Organizations focussing on non-formal education for exam-

ple in culture, sports, volunteering and music in order to fight against stigmatization of disadvantaged groups;

52. create incentives to improve the conditions of the nursing and care professions and to work towards intensified professional and vocational training for people employed in the health sector to significantly facilitate a cost-effective health system in the region and foster understanding of the health sector as a cross-cutting issue;

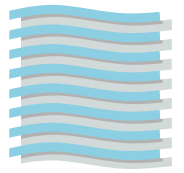
53. fully recognize the social partners in the social and health care professions, protect their activities and ensure that social partners and trade unions will be involved in the regulatory and implementation process on health issues as early as possible;

54. carefully consider both physical and psycho-social risks at work place, against the background of a rising retirement age, strive for good working conditions, wellbeing and a sustainable work-life balance within the labour force of the Baltic Sea Region;

55. strive to establish laws for patients' rights in all the countries of the Baltic Sea Region and mechanisms to ensure that those rights are fulfilled;

56. establish a Working Group on Sustainable Tourism – with focus on cultural, economic and labour market, maritime and coastal tourism as well as ecological aspects and as a central pillar of maritime spatial planning and with a view to developing synergies with the policy area “Tourism” under the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region - to submit a first report at the 25<sup>th</sup> BSPC;

57. welcome with gratitude the kind offer of the Parliament of Latvia to host the 25th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Riga on 28 - 30 August 2016.



Conference Site Yachting & Spa Resort, Hohe Düne, in  
**Rostock on 30<sup>th</sup> August - 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015**



*Photo: Dr. Claudia Peters*

Meet you next time in Latvia, hosting the 25<sup>th</sup> Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in  
**Riga on 28<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> August 2016**



*Photo: shutterstock.com*

## Impressum

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