



Sixteenth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
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WRITTEN CONTRIBUTION

Council of the Baltic Sea States

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)¹ appreciates this opportunity to present an account of its role in the development of one of the most dynamic regions in Europe.

The CBSS was founded in 1992 as a response to the dramatic geopolitical changes that took place in the Baltic Sea Region with the end of the Cold War (www.cbss.org). The scope of our cooperation has much in common with the Helsinki process

The CBSS has achieved concrete results in a number of fields such as: combating trafficking in human beings (adults and children); enhancing energy dialogue between EU and non-EU countries in the region; alleviating regional barriers to trade and investment; improving nuclear and radiation safety; building confidence through cross-border co-operation; transforming curricula and teaching methods through the EuroFaculty Programme in Kaliningrad and now also in the Russian city of Pskov.

At present the CBSS is undergoing a reform process. The approach embedded in the so-called Riga Reform Declaration adopted in 2008 is directed towards reconsidering the aims of our regional cooperation and focusing on the added value to be drawn from it. The CBSS has defined the following long-term priorities for cooperation and agreed on some structural changes in order to adapt our organisation to the new realities, needs and tasks: 1) Environment (sustainability), 2) Energy and climate-related issues, 3) Education (including a cultural component), 4) Economic issues, focussing on innovation and competitiveness, and 5) Civil security and the human dimension.

Among these priorities, the current Danish CBSS Presidency focuses on energy and climate, safeguarding the environment, empowering youth and enhancing civil security.

Specifically, the following CBSS activities should be highlighted.

¹ The CBSS is a forum for multilateral intergovernmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. The members are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the European Commission.



To **counteract trafficking in human beings** in the Baltic Sea Region through preventive and protective activities is the overall objective of the eponymous CBSS Task Force. It focuses on persons over the age of 18 and is thereby complementing the work already ongoing in the CBSS Working Group for Children at Risk and in other structures outside the CBSS. The mandate of the Task Force runs until 30th June 2011. Denmark is currently chairing the Task Force.

The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, (ETS nr 197, 2005) is a cornerstone of the Task Force's work, which is basically focused on the following elements: 1) identifying victims of trafficking often discovered outside their country of residence or origin; 2) training the diplomatic and consular corps working in countries of origin, transit and destination, as they often are the first contact between the authorities of the home country and the victims of trafficking.

In addition to that, the Task Force has agreed on the following strategy and actions for 2008-2010: extending the training of diplomatic and consular personnel to all CBSS Member States (as an outcome a methodological handbook will be developed and distributed among embassies); launching a joint project with the UNODC to foster NGO and law enforcement cooperation in preventing trafficking; conducting regional information campaign against trafficking in human beings; producing a comparative regional legal analysis on human trafficking; compiling improved data with a view to support research on human trafficking in the region.

Information about the Task Force's activities is regularly shared with the OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The delegates of the Task Force regularly take part in OSCE events as national experts. And cross-invitations allow for enhanced contacts between the experts of the two organisations. More information is available at the CBSS Permanent International Secretariat in Stockholm².

Regarding the **promotion of tolerance**, which is on the agenda of the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office programme, the CBSS is considering whether to establish an Expert Group on Tolerance as part of its ongoing reform in the field of Civil Security and Human Dimension. Draft terms of reference for such an Expert Group are currently being studied.

² The CBSS Secretariat will provide an article for the next issue of the OSCE Review - European Security, featuring human dimension issues in the OSCE area including human trafficking. The article will present insights of the work of the CBSS Task Force.



In the field of **strengthening democratic governance**, the CBSS has compiled a Comparative study on “Corruption Prevention in Public Administration in the countries of the Baltic Sea Region” (<http://www.cbss.org/structure/wgdi/dbaFile17500.html>). The study focuses on internal mechanisms of corruption prevention and promotion of integrity in public administration. It provides a concise overview of the Baltic Sea countries’ strategic approaches to anti-corruption *sensu largo* and, in particular, of the measures available to public agencies to prevent possible corruption internally. The study is unique not only in providing a truly regional perspective to the matter that is usually dealt with nationally, but also in focussing on a region that shows great diversity in terms of the perceived levels of corruption. One of the aims of the Study was to spur the exchange of experiences and best practices between the countries concerned and to enhance mutual learning.

In the fields of **energy and climate** a CBSS-related intergovernmental working body Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation (BASREC) serves as a platform for collaboration, dialogue, networking and knowledge-sharing between the EU and non-EU countries of the Baltic Sea Region with an active involvement of the European Commission. The scope of BASREC includes climate change, electricity, energy efficiency, energy infrastructure, gas issues and renewable energy sources with a particular focus on bio-energy. The work of the BASREC in close cooperation with the Baltic-21 Working Group on Bio-energy was crowned by a Strategic project on Bio-Energy, which has received most of its funding through the EU Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-13.

In 2007-08 the BASREC has produced a Study on Security of Supply in the Baltic Sea Region, providing a comprehensive overview of energy supply in the Member States in the following areas: Electricity, Natural Gas, Coal, Oil, Nuclear Energy, Renewable Energy Sources, and Energy efficiency.

The upcoming BASREC Ministerial Conference (Copenhagen, February 2009) is expected to set new benchmarks for energy and climate cooperation for the next triennial term 2009-11.

In the field of **empowering youth**, the CBSS Working Group on Youth Affairs has planned a conference under the theme “Turning young people into active citizens by integrating science and sustainable development into their everyday life”, be held in early 2009.

In the field of **safeguarding the environment** the CBSS-related structure Baltic-21 is ready to assist in implementing the Baltic Sea Action Plan adopted in 2007 by the Helsinki Commission and aiming to combat the continuing deterioration of the Baltic marine environment resulting from human activities.



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In addition, the CBSS is considering how to appropriately involve other countries from the catchment area of the Baltic Sea, such as Belarus, in its work. Following a fact-finding mission by the CBSS Secretariat to Belarus in May 2007 the CBSS working structures have been encouraged to include Belarus at the expert level in concrete projects and activities.

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