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Berlin, 27 – 29 August 2023

Draft: 29 08 2023, 9.30 FINAL VERSION

## **Conference Resolution**

### **Official Draft – based on consensual agreement by the BSPC Drafting Committee meeting on 27 August 2023**

Adopted by the 32<sup>nd</sup> Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC)

The participants, elected representatives from the

Parliament of Denmark  
Parliament of Estonia  
Parliament of Finland  
Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany  
Parliament of Iceland  
Parliament of Latvia  
Parliament of Lithuania  
Parliament of Norway  
Parliament of Poland  
Parliament of Sweden  
Parliament of Åland  
Parliament of the Hanseatic City of Bremen  
Parliament of Faroe Islands  
Parliament of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg  
Parliament of Greenland  
Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern  
Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein  
Baltic Assembly  
European Parliament  
Nordic Council,

assembling in Berlin on 29 August 2023

- do not slacken in repeating again and again in the strongest possible terms our condemnation of the completely unjust and full-scale brutal military attack and invasion by the Russian Federation against the sovereignty, independence, and people of Ukraine;
- underline the imperative to fully restore the territorial integrity of Ukraine, which explicitly includes the Crimean Peninsula;

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- firmly condemn the Russian Federation’s continued massive violations of international law, including the UN Charter, the infringement of the very foundation of the rules-based international order and the trampling on the principles that had been the cornerstone of peace and stability for many decades;
- whilst regretting that the international community until now has not been able to prevent the deportations and forcible transfers of thousands of Ukrainian children and civilian adults to the Russian Federation, Belarus or temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, draw attention to the need to take urgent corrective measures to put an end to such criminal and incomprehensible activities that are a part of the full-scale unprovoked, unjustifiable, and illegal war of aggression by the Russian Federation against democratic and sovereign Ukraine;
- decry the continued war crimes against civilians, which Russia also commits through the targeted destruction and exposure of critical infrastructure such as the Nova Kakhovka dam and the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant;
- in this respect, fully endorse the content of the statements made by the Foreign Ministers of the Democratic States of the Baltic Sea Region in their CBSS declaration on 2 June 2023 as a result of their 20<sup>th</sup> ministerial summit in Wismar concerning the violation of international law by Russia, about Belarus being an accomplice in this unjustified aggression, regarding the unwavering solidarity with Ukraine and concerning the threats for the security in the Baltic Sea region; [https://cbss.org/wp-content/anauploads/2023/05/cbss-wismar-declaration\\_2-june-2023.pdf](https://cbss.org/wp-content/anauploads/2023/05/cbss-wismar-declaration_2-june-2023.pdf)
- given the fundamental challenges the BSPC member countries face in these geopolitical times of change, see the absolute necessity to strengthen the resilience of their democratic societies based on the values that unite the democratic Baltic Sea region countries, as pointed out in the BSPC Statutes and Rules of Procedure, and rigorously promote innovation, digitalisation, connectivity and sustainability through close cooperation and joint strategic efforts;
- underline the need for even more joint action on politically relevant core areas to strengthen the political force of shaping the implementation of common challenges and interests to actively preserve human rights, peace, security and stability in the Baltic Sea region;

**call on the Governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS, and the EU**

**Regarding peaceful and reliable neighbourliness and intense cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region based on fundamental values to**

1. strongly increase and intensify the efforts to strengthen democracy, rule of law, equality, and human rights in the Baltic Sea Region and beyond and acknowledge that these values in today's shifting geopolitical realities are under threat in our own region;

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2. achieve in the fields of common political interest more significant progress by joint practical measures – analogous to the handling of the topic of offshore wind and the agreement reached on it [https://cbss.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/230509\\_berlin-declaration-on-baltic-offshore-wind-by-cbss-foreign-ministers\\_final\\_consented.pdf](https://cbss.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/230509_berlin-declaration-on-baltic-offshore-wind-by-cbss-foreign-ministers_final_consented.pdf) – and thus develop the Baltic Sea region into a best-practice example for other macro-regions and acquire in this way push effects for further advancement within the framework of broader cooperation formats;
  3. ensure inclusive, socially and environmentally sustainable economic growth and development as well as energy security;
  4. cooperate as closely as possible in pursuit of the goal of ensuring energy security, self-sustainability and security of supply by concrete measures and the development of joint strategies, aiming to reduce dependency on Russian fossil resources, promote clean and affordable energy and the underlying industrial value chains, develop a integrated and resilient European energy market, as well as encourage deeper collaboration in energy and sustainability R&D;
  5. intensify and deepen cooperation to develop better protection for critical shared underwater infrastructure;
  6. search for more streamlined funding mechanisms for the development of truly interconnected, sustainable and resilient cross-border transport infrastructure, as well as the transition to a single European digital market resilient to internal and external threats;
  7. in view of the Glasgow Climate Pact and the commitments of the Paris Agreement, mobilize government, businesses and civil society to jointly accelerate strategic cooperation in climate change mitigation, preservation of nature and biodiversity, as well as just transition towards a climate-neutral economy;
  8. in view of the current geopolitical challenges that require more cooperation and coordination of activities, return to meetings of heads of government, alternating with foreign ministers;
  9. extend sectoral ministerial conferences – as had been the case with the VASAB Conference of Baltic Sea region ministers responsible for spatial planning and development together with the CBSS summit of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs on 1-2 June 2023 in Wismar – to jointly tackle the relevant Baltic Sea region challenges in politically significant core areas;
  10. expand cross-border, transnational, and inter-regional cooperation (Interreg) and strengthen synergies between the different Baltic Sea policy cooperation formats;
  11. underline the continued importance of strengthening social resilience in the Baltic Sea Region and support the ongoing process of setting up an annual award for local authorities to shine as a “Baltic Sea Region Cultural Pearl” by fostering resilience through cultural activities;
  12. strengthen the role of the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region, focusing on the current political core challenges in the Baltic Sea region, expanding the involvement of the democratic neighbour countries, and including support for Ukraine during the war and afterwards for the reconstruction and strengthening democracy in Ukraine;

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13. supporting democratic developments in the neighbouring countries of the Baltic Sea Region, especially strengthening democratic stakeholders for a democratic development of Belarus and Russia;
  14. underline the continued importance of social sustainability along with the green and digital transitions and pay insofar particular interest, on the one hand, to the demographic change with an ageing population and the need for upskilling and reskilling along with adequate pension systems as well as, on the other hand, to the integration of migrants and all vulnerable groups in need of support to enter or remain in the labour market, and gender equality;
  15. increase and support the involvement of civil society in Baltic Sea policy activities;
  16. support and perpetuate the now-established involvement of youth in the CBSS work to include the concerns of the young generation in the core concerns of the Baltic Sea region issues;

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**Regarding enhancing democratic resilience and boosting capabilities to face modern digital challenges to**

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17. consistently and resolutely counter the growing threat to the democratic community posed by disinformation campaigns, with a particular focus on information warfare carried out by the Russian Federation;
  18. point out again the necessity – particularly in times of war and crisis – of strengthening efforts to increase confidence in democratic structures and values, to counter digital hate speech, promote tolerance and open-mindedness, freedom of media and expression, and robust democratic NGOs as cornerstones of democracies in the Baltic Sea region;
  19. protect the rights and ensure the safety of refugees, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ people, women, children, the elderly and other vulnerable groups who are particularly at risk in times of war and threatened by intolerant attitudes;
  20. defend sexual and reproductive autonomy and respect the right to reproductive health;
  21. improve legislation and measures to protect democratic processes and institutions from cyber threats;
  22. increase public awareness and digital literacy to enable citizens to identify and mitigate the risks of misinformation and disinformation;
  23. ensure that digital platforms and technology companies operate according to the ethical standards of the democratic countries around the Baltic Sea and are held accountable for inadequate content moderation practices, algorithms, and data handling;
  24. expand research and innovation capacities in cybersecurity and digital resilience;
  25. promote responsible digital behaviour and ethics in the public and private sectors and adopt ethical guidelines e.g. to ensure anti-discrimination and equality, codes of conduct, and accountability mechanisms to ensure responsible digital practices and protect democratic values;

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26. enhance the security and resilience of the Baltic Sea Region by strengthening cooperation in areas such as defence, energy security, and cyber security;

**Regarding strengthening the resilience of maritime ecosystems to**

27. alongside the ambitious actions that the BSPC resolution urges concerning marine resilience and resilience of climate and biodiversity, also take into account other important dimensions in achieving a sustainable development in line with the Agenda 2030, such as social and economic aspects. Conflicting interests should be taken into account and analysed, for example those between climate policy and biodiversity preservation;
28. cooperate and act decisively towards a clean, healthy, and productive Baltic Sea with resilient marine and coastal ecosystems;
29. intensify cooperation to reach the goals of the Lisbon Declaration adopted at the UN Ocean Conference held in 2022;
30. increase joint efforts to reduce the outlet of nutrients, which contributes to eutrophication, biodiversity loss, and weakening the Baltic Sea as an attractive travel destination;
31. aim at putting in place an internationally legally binding agreement that allows a shift to a more sustainable plastics economy that minimises plastics waste and its impact on the environment and human health with the goal of ending plastic pollution and the ambition to reduce additional plastic pollution to zero by 2040;
32. implement coastal management plans to protect and restore coastal ecosystems, which can act as carbon sinks and buffer zones against sea-level rise (*WG/Climate 9*);
33. expand the existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) network and improve cooperation and transboundary management between marine protected areas in the Baltic Sea to ensure proper enforcement to protect vulnerable habitats and species;
34. contribute to the rapid entry into force of the landmark international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) from 19 June 2023 and use its tools and possibilities in intensive cooperation within the CBSS and HELCOM to reach the goals mentioned above (*WG/Biodiversity 16*);
35. ensure a quick and strict implementation of the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan and its associated action documents within the agreed timelines in all democratic HELCOM member states to achieve a good ecological status of the Baltic Sea by the end of the decade and consider as far as possible implementing further measures from the policy-relevant suggestions for various policy areas in the HELCOM 2021 Climate Change in the Baltic Sea Fact Sheet to reach this goal;
36. establish and enforce recognisable, legally binding sustainable fishing quotas in the Baltic Sea Region with diversification for species, including regulations on fishing nets or other methods, ensuring that fish stocks remain healthy and sustainable in the long term. All actions should be based on respected, up-to-

- 281 date research. To prevent population crashes, the aim should be to reduce fishing  
282 quotas down to or below scientifically advised thresholds in the Baltic Sea;  
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284 37. strengthen regulations and enforcement mechanisms to prevent pollution and  
285 minimise the discharge of pollutants into the Baltic Sea;  
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287 38. introduce stricter controls on industry, shipping, and agriculture to reduce inputs  
288 of nutrients, hazardous wastes, and harmful emissions to protect biodiversity  
289 and the ecological balance of the marine environment;  
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291 39. raise public awareness of the importance of marine ecosystems and the need for  
292 their conservation by conducting education campaigns, engaging local  
293 communities, and promoting citizens' initiatives to increase a sense of  
294 responsibility and encourage public participation in efforts to protect and restore  
295 the ecological health of the Baltic Sea;  
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299 **Regarding strengthening the resilience of climate and biodiversity to**

300 Climate Change

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303 40. increase the efforts and speed to implement ambitious national climate targets  
304 and adapted extensions – corresponding to the current scientific and  
305 measurement results – in line with the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting the  
306 increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above  
307 pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to  
308 1.5 degrees Celsius above those;  
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310 41. strengthen regional collaboration and information exchange among the  
311 democratic Baltic Sea countries and the Arctic to intensify joint strategies and  
312 policies addressing climate change and regularly adapt them to the newest  
313 research results, not neglecting the need to ensure a socially just transition;  
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315 42. urge at every opportunity the world's three largest CO<sub>2</sub> emitters, which currently  
316 account for more than 50 % of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, to step up their efforts to  
317 achieve ambitious climate targets;  
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319 43. incentivise renewable energy development by shortening the permitting process  
320 for wind, solar, other clean and stable energy sources;  
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322 44. taking into account the risks connected with the increasing dependence of the  
323 European market on the suppliers of rare metals and other raw materials,  
324 increase the speed in implementing national strategies for transitioning away  
325 from fossil fuels and towards low-carbon energy systems, and wisely diversifying  
326 our energy mixes so that there is no shortage of energy, the energy comes from  
327 reliable sources and is economically viable, avoiding energy poverty and sudden  
328 price increases;  
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330 45. acknowledging the different energy strategies and focuses in different states to  
331 reach these goals, increase the focus on the communal and regional levels on  
332 implementing adequate climate change measures and to raise awareness in the  
333 responsible administrations;  
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335 46. support increased research and innovation in climate change mitigation and  
336 adaptation technologies, encouraging collaboration between academic  
337 institutions, industries, and governments;  
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- 339 47. develop incentives and support for integrating climate change education and  
340 awareness-raising programmes into curricula, public campaigns, and  
341 professional development programmes;  
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- 343 48. foster cross-border cooperation on regional climate initiatives, engaging  
344 neighbouring countries and international organisations in joint efforts to address  
345 climate change in the Baltic Sea region;  
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- 347 49. convene annual Baltic Sea Climate and Biodiversity Summits to raise public  
348 awareness, track progress, share best practices, and refine regional strategies  
349 to accelerate increased climate action and adaptation;  
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352 Biodiversity  
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- 354 50. make strong efforts to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and contribute  
355 to making the democratic Baltic Sea region as much as possible a macro-regional  
356 best practice example in this regard for the world;  
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- 358 51. fully implement as fast as possible the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity  
359 Framework (GBF) adopted at the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention  
360 on Biological Diversity (CBD-COP15) on 19 December 2022 with its mission to  
361 halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, adapt the existing national and Baltic  
362 Sea broad strategies and programmes and to cooperate intensively among the  
363 democratic Baltic Sea States to realise a swift and effective implementation of  
364 the GBF so that the Baltic Sea region becomes a global best practice example in  
365 implementing the Global Biodiversity Framework;  
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- 367 52. consider an ecosystem-based management approach when revising and  
368 adapting action plans and strategies to achieve these goals and implementing  
369 these measures. This means management that considers the whole ecosystem  
370 and all human activities, which is aware of and incorporates all pressures and  
371 interactions and aims to protect, restore, or enhance the resilience and  
372 sustainability of the aquatic ecosystem to ensure the sustainable provision of  
373 ecosystem services and maintain the biodiversity;  
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- 375 53. further, commit to protecting biodiversity and increasing carbon sequestration  
376 and natural storage with common and national policies for:  
377 a. conservation of carbon-rich ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, seagrass  
378 meadows and natural rivers;  
379 b. continuation of sustainable forest management;  
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- 381 54. develop and execute plans to enhance the resilience of the Baltic Sea ecosystem  
382 to climate change, including protecting coastal habitats and restoring wetlands;  
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- 384 55. reverse land degradation by 2030, and promote sustainable forest and peatland  
385 management given their importance for climate and biodiversity;  
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- 387 56. significantly increase efforts to fundamentally improve nutrient management in  
388 agriculture, industry, and wastewater treatment plants to reduce nutrient runoff  
389 into the Baltic Sea, which contributes to eutrophication and biodiversity loss;  
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- 391 57. develop and adopt regional strategies to deal with transboundary emergencies,  
392 including forest fires, eutrophication, and spreading pathogens, some of which  
393 are exacerbated by climate change and pollution. The strategies should include  
394 research into the causes of such emergencies, cooperation between rescue  
395 services, and joint monitoring programmes that indicate the risks of such  
396 emergencies;

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- 58. cooperate to prevent the introduction and spread of new invasive alien species, work to effectively eradicate invasive species in the Baltic Sea Region and to develop and exchange best practices;

**Considering the special attention the BSPC devoted to the issue of dumped ammunition in the Baltic Sea, particularly during the Presidency of the German Bundestag, the Conference strongly welcomes**

- 59. the intensive consideration of the issue of dumped ammunition in the Baltic Sea by the Council of the Baltic Sea States during the German Presidency – and during the 20<sup>th</sup> session of the Council of the Baltic Sea States on 1 and 2 June 2023 in Wismar;
- 60. the initiation of a cross-sectoral, multidisciplinary, and macro-regional dialogue on underwater munitions in line with its previous demands during the round table of experts in Kiel in December 2022 and the joint consultation of HELCOM and the CBSS in April 2023;
- 61. the German government's decision – based on the resolution of the German Bundestag to provide € 100 million for this purpose – to initiate a national immediate action programme for the recovery of underwater munitions in the Baltic and North Seas, including the development of a mobile platform for munitions clearance, and to share the experience gained from this;

In addition, the BSPC states that responsible precautionary policy begins with active and sufficient action at that point in time when necessary action must be taken to avert later enormous and subsequently unpreventable massive damage to people and the environment in the Baltic Sea region. In the view of the BSPC, this point in time has come after years of intensive treatment of the issue of ammunition deposits in the Baltic Sea, according to the findings of its rapporteurs, the statements in the BSPC resolutions since 2019 as well as based on the reports submitted by the BSPC and an intensive exchange with leading experts in this field, which has been deepened in the past year. Based on current activities and measures, according to the consensus of leading scientists, removing the munitions deposits would take some 100 years. At the same time, significant damage to humans and the environment can be expected in 20-30 years. Therefore, the initiation and implementation of a joint strategic approach and effort by the Baltic Sea States are called for to avoid the damage to human safety, environment safety, security, and the economy that would otherwise occur, according to current scientific knowledge, from the 400,000 tonnes of conventional and 40,000 tonnes of chemical munitions dumped in the Baltic Sea. To achieve the goal of eliminating the hazard situation within the next 20 years, which is considered highly relevant for the BSPC, it is necessary not only to push the clearance with increased efforts and coordinated cooperation but also, in particular, to rapidly advance by reducing the bottleneck of effectively rendering the munitions harmless, i.e., the final disposal as well as storage capacities on land.

**in light of the foregoing, the BSPC calls on the Governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS, and the EU to**

- 62. go beyond the previous agreements of the governments and initiate a joint strategic approach and effort of the democratic Baltic Sea states - as has been achieved concerning the expansion of offshore wind capacities -, also based on the continuation of the cooperation between CBSS and HELCOM, as well as consider establishing a joint financial instrument to succeed in the goal, which the BSPC considers of great importance, of eliminating the hazardous situation



455 caused by ammunition dumped in the Baltic Sea within the next 20 years at the  
456 latest;

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458 63. continue close cooperation between the CBSS, HELCOM, and other relevant  
459 organisations to fill knowledge gaps, develop best environmental practices for  
460 risk assessment, and explore funding opportunities for the development and  
461 implementation of the best available techniques for environmentally sound and  
462 safe management.

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**Furthermore, the Conference Decides to**

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468 64. establish a two-year Working Group on Energy Security, Self-sustainability,  
469 Resilience and Connectivity - based on the decisions of the BSPC Standing  
470 Committee - to submit a first report at the 33<sup>rd</sup> BSPC and

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472 65. welcome with gratitude the kind offer by the Danish Folketinget to host the  
473 33<sup>rd</sup> Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Helsingør on 25-27 August 2024.

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