



The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference
President and Vice-President

25 February 2022

Postponement of the Digital BSPC Standing Committee Meeting

**Dear members of the BSPC Standing Committee,
Dear registered participants of the Digital Standing Committee Meeting,**

In view of the war in Ukraine, we have today intensively discussed the current situation in our capacity as President and Vice-President of the BSPC.

We have concluded that it is necessary to publish the attached statement on the BSPC website. In this statement, we condemn in the strongest possible terms the completely unjust and full-scale military attack and invasion being carried out by the Russian Federation against the sovereignty, independence, and people of Ukraine.

For the reasons set out in the statement, we have also decided to **temporarily suspend the meeting of the Standing Committee of the BSPC scheduled for 28 February.**

This decision is the inevitable result of the current situation and development. It is in line with the clear statements and opinions we have received from member parliaments.

Parliamentary decisions initiating an unprovoked war - the invasion of Ukraine, a sovereign and peaceful country - fundamentally break the foundations of our parliamentary cooperation. As the current Presidency we make sure that our work and every future BSPC-Presidency will be based on international law and human rights, peace and democracy as the fundamental principles we all agreed on.

We strongly appeal to our Russian member parliaments to bring about decisions to affect the current situation in such a way that a continuation of our 31 years of cooperation seems possible. Stop the war and senseless bloodshed immediately.

We thank all, particularly our invited guests from our partner organisations and experts, who have prepared intensively for this meeting.

We will continue to intensively consult on the developments and inform you of further steps and decisions at an appropriate time.

Yours sincerely,

Pyry Niemi
President

of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference

Johannes Schraps
Vice-President

STATEMENT OF THE RUSSIAN DELEGATION TO THE BSPC

On 25 February 2022 the BSPC Chairmanship issued a statement about "the impossibility of continuing our parliamentary cooperation in the previous trusting manner" with the Russian Federation. The meeting of the BSPC Standing Committee, previously scheduled for 28 February 2022, has been canceled.

In view of the lack of opportunity to convey our position to the partners within the framework of this sitting the Russian delegation addresses the BSPC with its own statement.

We consider the position of the BSPC President Pyry Niemi and Vice-President Johannes Schraps condemning Russia's actions, which allegedly pose a threat to peace, stability and democracy, as politicized and biased, as an example of double standards.

For thirty one years of its existence the BSPC has worked within its geographical and thematic mandate. Today, contrary to this mandate, the current Chairmanship of the Organization has allowed itself to make unjustified criticism of Russia's steps to protect our compatriots and citizens from genocide and violence by the Kiev regime.

Therefore a legitimate question arises – why a similar approach was not applied in response to massive violations of human rights, democracy, the rule of law, death and large-scale destructions as a result of NATO actions in Yugoslavia, the invasions of the United States and its allies in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya.

For eight years since the armed coup d'état in Kiev in 2014, not a single BSPC chairmanship reacted to the criminal actions of the Ukrainian leadership and the Verkhovna Rada, the unprecedented violation of the rights of the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine, nor condemned the policy under which Nazism revived and strengthened in the country.

We are sure that you, colleagues, will be ashamed when the whole truth about these crimes is revealed.

Russia has made every possible diplomatic effort to convince its partners to fulfill the Package of measures for implementation of the Minsk Agreements of 2015, approved by the UN Security Council Resolution 2202.

Instead, Western countries, led by the USA, played along with Kiev in every possible way and ignored Ukraine's sabotage of the Minsk Agreements. Their policy towards the militarization of Ukraine, the rupture of historical ties between our countries and peoples, the support for the actions of neo-Nazis - hardly all this can be called a contribution to the strengthening of the pan-European security.

The Ukrainian authorities defiantly rejected political and diplomatic dialogue with the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, carrying out bloody crimes against civilians and attempting a final military solution to the Donbass Question.

Russia accepted tens of thousands of refugees suffering from large-scale shellings by Ukrainian forces. As a result Russia was forced to respond properly to the actions of Kiev and all those who encouraged it.

On 21 February 2022 President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin signed Decrees recognizing the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics as sovereign and independent states, as well as Treaties on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between Russia and the aforementioned Republics.

In accordance with Article 51, Part 7 of the UN Charter in pursuance of these agreements, ratified by the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on 22 February 2022, President of the Russian Federation decided to conduct a special military operation. This operation is aimed at demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine.

As for the BSPC, in the near future we will determine our position regarding Russia's participation in this Organization. The responsibility for the possible termination of parliamentary cooperation with the Russian side will rest entirely with those who put forward such initiatives.

We have always considered the BSPC as a platform to promote non-politicized dialogue between parliamentarians of the entire Baltic Sea region. Over the history of its existence the BSPC has implemented a large number of important projects in a wide range of areas related to ensuring sustainable environmental, economic and cultural Baltic cooperation. The elaboration of solutions on socially significant issues for the benefit of citizens of all member countries is among them.

Only through joint efforts concrete positive results can be achieved in the interests of the Baltic States.

We look forward to continuing a constructive mutually beneficial dialogue.