

The 27th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference

26th - 28th August 2018 in Mariehamn, Åland Islands
– BSPC in a Nutshell –



The Baltic Sea – Our Lifeline Cooperation, Sustainability and Smart Energy

The 27th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference took place in Mariehamn, Åland Islands. Around 170 delegates met in the Plenary Hall of the Åland Lagtinget, the Parliament of Åland. The aim of this year's conference was to pass a resolution on cooperation, sustainability and smart energy in the Baltic Sea Region – our lifeline. The conference was opened by H.E. Mr Sauli Niinistö, President of the Republic of Finland, and Ms Gun-Mari Lind-

holm, President of Ålands Lagting, welcomed the participants.

The BSPC Drafting Committee and the BSPC Standing Committee held their first sessions on Sunday, 26th August, in the Plenary Hall of the Ålands Lagting. In the afternoon, there were two excursions: one to the municipality of Föglö and the other to Bormasund Fortress.

On Monday the first two sessions took place in the Ålands Lagting. The

first session focused on cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region and it continued into the afternoon. The second session was a call for more action on the vision of a healthy Baltic Sea. A cultural event at the Åland Maritime Museum closed the day.

On Tuesday the third session on sustainable energy and smart energy distribution platforms was followed by a general debate and the closing of the 27th BSPC conference.

Extracts from the Opening Speech given by H.E. Mr Sauli Niinistö, President of the Republic of Finland

“I am very pleased to address you at the 27th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Mariehamn. Let me warmly congratulate the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference and the host, Ålands Lagting, for organizing this year’s conference. [...]”

Next year, Finland will assume the Presidency of the European Union. Then, 10 years after the adoption of the Strategy, is a good moment to take a look at its achievements. The purpose of the EU Strategy is to find solutions to the challenges faced by the Region: connect the region, save the sea and increase prosperity. [...]

When arriving to the Åland islands, we can see that the archipelago truly is one of the most beautiful ones in the world with its thousands of islands of smooth rocks and species-rich landscape. Un-

fortunately, the Baltic Sea around this priceless landscape is not feeling well at all. Especially after this exceptionally warm summer, we have witnessed quite worrying algal blooms. This summer, the sky has been clear, but the sea hasn’t. [...]

We cannot delay reducing the nutrient load from human activities, like agriculture, nor in reducing the amount of plastic litter that enter the sea. Action is needed now. We, you and me, gathered here today, have the responsibility and it cannot be handed over to future generations. [...]

Finland took over the Chairmanship of HELCOM this summer for a two-year period. A priority of the Finnish Chairmanship is the updating of The HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), the roadmap for achieving



the goals for a healthy sea environment. [...]

I warmly support the idea that one day the Baltic Sea region also becomes a model area for sustainable development. [...] Together we will achieve the goals for a better environment. But we have to keep in mind: structures and conferences don’t mean anything without concrete action.

I wish you enriching discussions and a good spirit of cooperation. Thank you.“

Welcome address by Ms Gun-Mari Lindholm, President of Ålands Lagting

„Mr President of the Republic of Finland, Speakers, Presidents, Dear All, it is an honour for me to greet you all, welcome to Åland.

Our islands are often mentioned as the Islands of Peace. The Åland Autonomy as well as the status as demilitarized and neutralized zone in the middle of the Baltic Sea is an international solution where several of your countries took part. Åland gained its autonomy in 1921. It was a decision by the League of Nations. One important cornerstone was the security in the Baltic. A decision which still is valid today and is a guarantee for the security in the Baltic Sea. I wish we will have a rewarding confer-

ence, the topics on the agenda are current and urgent, interesting and forward-thinking. Besides a successful conference I wish you will learn about Åland, our Autonomy, our demilitarized status, our business life and about our everydaylife on a sunny and windy island in the Baltic Sea. The Baltic Sea separate us but also unite us. It is the same Sea we leave to our children and grandchildren to sail and to swim in.

I hope we will come to smart solutions together and find ways forward for the environment and humanity. It’s just us who live around the Baltic Sea who are the best experts to set the agenda for it.



Together, large countries and small islands we protect the Baltic Sea.

Thank you all for coming. I wish you all the best days in Åland, interesting debates and that many friendships are linked, that itself is a guarantee of cooperation and for peace!

Välkomna”

Excursions to the Island and Municipality of Föglö and Bomarsund Fortress

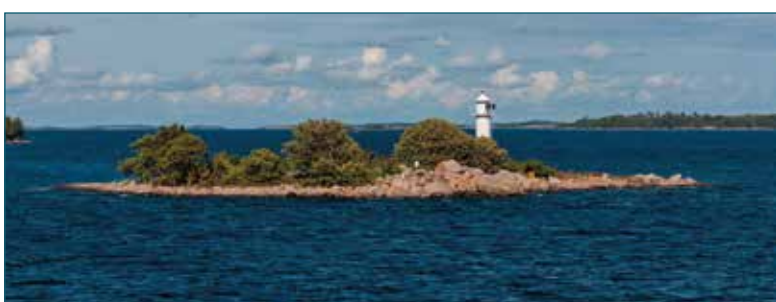


In the afternoon of Sunday, 26th August, two excursions took place. One trip provided participants with an insight into daily life in the Archipelago. A trip with the ferry led them to the small island and municipality of Föglö in the archipelago.

A bus trip to the main island and a visit to the Bomarsund Fortress area provided participants with some historical

and political background to its present autonomy. Remains of the Russian military like fortifications, dwelling houses and other buildings can nowadays be seen in the terrain as ruins and house-foundation. The main fortress was the centrepiece of Bomarsund and was built as a powerful defensive symbol for the Russian Tsar's authority in the Baltic Sea of the first half of the 19. century. In August 1854 the for-

ress was attacked by a British-French force. The defence was quickly overcome. The main fort was blown up and never rebuilt. The participants of the excursion furthermore visited the ruins of a defence tower, also blown up 1854, with an amazing view over the landscape and archipelago of Åland. A reception and dinner hosted by Ålands Lagting in the Badhusparken Pavillion closed the first day.



Extracts of the Report from the BSPC Chair

Mr Jörgen Pettersson, MP, President of the BSPC



“[...] In the past year, the BSPC has visibly and in every respect fulfilled its strategic objectives and achieved significant progress: On the basis of our programme and our resolution

- we have communicated our principles and core messages at a large number of Baltic Sea-relevant events and beyond,
- we have intensified the cooperation with our partners, and
- our programmatic concerns and contents are perceived much more strongly.

We are becoming increasingly successful in influencing government action. [...]

We have geared our activities to these topics and targets: The first Standing Committee under the Åland Presidency took place here in Mariehamn. In the run-up to the establishment of our working group “Integration and Migration”, we had a detailed presentation on this topic and a lively exchange of information with experts from Åland. [...]

The Standing Committee also took the opportunity in Brussels to discuss the possible consequences of Brexit for the Baltic Sea region and we also made good on our promise to liaison with our partners, most importantly the CBSS. [...]

Ms Susanne Scherrer, Director of the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat in Rostock, Kiel and Riga, among many important facts concerning the transnational cooperation pointed out that currently capacity for offshore wind energy production was barely used in the BSR, due to missing connections between electricity grids, gaps in Research & Development and insufficient cooperation. [...]

The key messages at all these events were: Based on our fundamental convictions I pointed out the vital importance of international parliamentary cooperation – especially in times of tense situations, I have repeatedly pointed out the need for interparliamentary dialogue and to strengthen the influence of parliaments. We are the voice of the people who, all over the world, want love, security, prosperity, peace and freedom.

And I have underscored the necessity to include the young generation in our deliberations.

That’s why we supported from the very beginning the youth summit ReGeneration 2030, that’s why the BSPC attended and that’s why we will get a presentation from two representatives about the results and the manifesto they agreed to. And we even go one step further: One of the representatives of the summit will moderate the panel debate. [...]

In addition, our rapporteurs have been to a number of events and have taken on board the findings relevant to their policy fields. This is detailed in the written and oral reports to follow. The tremendous work behind all this becomes apparent when you look at the reports that have been published on our website day after day during the past week. On behalf of the BSPC I want to express my thanks to all of you involved in this work.

What I am now recording as this year’s conclusion also includes what my very esteemed colleague and Vice-President Carola Veit is about to comment on: namely the step-by-step and year-by-year intensified reactions of governments to our resolutions. [...]

We have further deepened our internal contacts and relationships through many discussions and close cooperation. We have grown more and more into one family. And we are demonstrating today that those who once worked for us continue to belong to the family: with Christina Gestrin and her presentation. She was our long-standing President as well as presiding over our 19th BSPC 2009 in this plenary hall and is dealing now intensively with ‘Environmental Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region’ and with our former President, Working Group Chairman and long-standing Rapporteur for labour and social affairs, Franz Thönnies. Once you have been connected to us, you will never get away from us again. [...]

I wish us all a very successful conference, the deepening of our cooperation and friendships and wise decisions that will take us forward. And let’s get better and better in working together for a prosperous, clean and peaceful Baltic Sea. It is time to work.”

Ms **Paula Lehtomäki**, State Secretary to the Prime Minister of Finland informed participants on the development of Finland's strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Main core of the maritime policy is to ensure sustainable blue growth by protecting the ocean and the seas, developing maritime cluster and blue economy as well as maritime logistics.



FIRST SESSION

Cooperation in the Baltic Sea region

Chair: Jörgen Pettersson, MP, President of the BSPC
Vice-Chair: Jorodd Asphjell, MP, Norway,
Vice-President of the BSPC



*Ms Carola
Veit*



*Mr Hans
Olsson*



*Mr Juris
Bone*



*Mr Hans
Wallmark*



*Mr Simon
Holmström*



*Ms Hanna
Salmén*

The first session of the conference introduced the “Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region”. The session was chaired by **Mr Jörgen Pettersson**, President of the BSPC, and **Jorodd Asphjell**, Member of Parliament from Norway, as vice-chair.

Starting off in this first session, **Mr Jörgen Pettersson** reported from the BSPC Chair. Following this **Ms Carola Veit**, President of the Hamburg Parliament and Vice-President of the BSPC, informed the delegates about the implementation of the 26th BSPC Resolution.

Mr Hans Olsson, Ambassador of Sweden and outgoing chair of the

Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), and **Mr Juris Bone**, Chairman of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials, pointed out three priorities: integrity and societal security, dialogue and responsibility.

Mr Hans Wallmark, Member of Parliament from Sweden and Chairman of the BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration, presented the Midway Report of the working group. **Mr Simon Holmström** and **Ms Hanna Salmén**, representatives of the Youth Event “ReGeneration 2030” presented their Manifesto and the results of the summit taking place one week ago in Marienhamn. After the lunch break the first session con-

tinued with **Ms Christina Gestrin**, former Member of Parliament from Finland and BSPC President, presenting information on the environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea region.

Mr Franz Thönnies, former Member of Parliament from Germany and BSPC President, gave a joint report on the work of the CBSS/BSLF Coordination Group on Labour and Employment.

Ms Daria Akhutina, CBSS Senior Advisor on Economic Issues, coordinator for Baltic Sea Labour Forum' and secretary to CBSS Expert Group on maritime issues, gave a report on new developments.



*Ms Christina
Gestrin*



*Mr Franz
Thönnies*



*Ms Daria
Akbutina*



*Mr Pyry
Niemi*



*Mr Jochen
Schulte*



*Ms Saara-Sofia
Sirén*

Mr Pyry Niemi, Member of Parliament from Sweden and BSPC-Rapporteur on Labour Market and Social Welfare, discussed labour issues.

Briefings from BSPC Rapporteurs

The parliamentarians were updated by the BSPC Rapporteurs. The rapporteurs on Integrated Maritime Policy, **Mr Jörgen Pettersson** and **Mr Jochen Schulte**, on Cultural Affairs, **Ms Karin Gaardsted**, on Sustainable Tourism, **Ms Sara Kemetter**, on HELCOM and on Eutrophication,

Ms Saara-Sofia Sirén, presented the results of the action taken in their respective fields.

Addresses by the Representatives

Addresses followed by **Mr Roger Ryberg**, Chairman of the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC), and by **Ms Ulla-Karin Nurm**, Director of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being. **Gun Rudquist**, Head of Policy, Baltic Eye, rounded up the first session by reporting on “Bridging the

gap between science and policy – an example from Stockholm University Baltic Sea Centre”.



*Ms Ulla-Karin
Nurm*



*Ms Gun
Rudquist*



SECOND SESSION

The Vision of a Healthy Baltic Sea – A Call for more Action

*Chair: Prof Jānis Vucāns, MP, Latvia,
Co-Chair: Dorota Arciszewska-Mielewczyk, MP, Poland*

The second session was chaired by **Prof Dr. Jānis Vucāns**, Member of Parliament from Latvia, and **Ms Dorota Arciszewska-Mielewczyk**, Member of Parliament from Poland, as vice-chair. The speakers presented their views and statements on “The Vision of a Healthy Baltic Sea – A Call for more Action”.

Mr Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for the Environment, Mar-

itime Affairs and Fisheries, addressed participants in a video message on the topic: “Protecting our environment while maintaining our competitiveness in regards to the UN 2030 goals for our oceans and the Baltic Sea Action Plan”.

Mr Kimmo Tiilikainen, Minister of the Environment, Energy and Housing of Finland, stressed the priorities of the Finnish HELCOM Chairmanship and the future of the Baltic Sea Action Plan.

Ms Camilla Gunell, Deputy Prime Minister of the Åland Islands and Minister for Trade, Environment and Energy, informed the guests about the sustainability strategy of the Åland Islands as a best-practice example for the Baltic Sea Region.

Ms Otilia Thoreson, Director of the WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme, highlighted the Baltic Sea Scorecard and the need for stringent action.



*Mr Kimmo
Tiilikainen*



*Ms Camilla
Gunell*



*Ms Ottilia
Thoreson*



*Mr Marc
Klaus*



*Mr Jari
Nahkanen*

Mr Marc Klaus, Race for the Baltic, Baltic Sea City Accelerator, talked about the private sector's engagement in a healthy Baltic Sea and a better Environment.

Mr Jari Nahkanen, Chairman CPMR Baltic Sea Commission, stressed that emphasis must be put on implementation, sufficient funding and the support of actors at the local and regional levels.

The second session was closed after a panel debate moderated by Mr Simon Holmström from ReGeneration 2030.



THIRD SESSION

Sustainable Energy, Smart energy distribution platforms

The chair of the third session was **Ms Valentina Pivnenko**, Member of Parliament of the Russian Federation, and vice-chair was **Ms Karin Gaardsted**, Member of Parliament from Denmark. The discussion evolved around "Sustainable energy, smart energy distribution platforms". Contributions were made about pilot projects in the Baltic Sea Region on the

next generation electrical grids. **Mr Berndt Schalin**, Senior Advisor of the Government of Åland, explained the future fossil free energy system on Åland.

Mr Lars Karlbom, Programme Manager of the Swedish Energy Agency, outlined Gotland as a pilot for energy transition in Sweden.

Mr Reinis Āboltiņš, Senior Adviser on Energy from Latvia, described challenges to sustainable energy in the Baltic Sea Region.

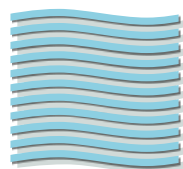
The third session ended in an open forum that made space for contributions from parliamentarians and for a general debate.











27 YEARS **BSPC**
BALTIC SEA PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

Conference Site Åland Islands in
Mariehamn on 26th – 28th August 2018



Meet you next time in Norway, hosting the 28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in
Oslo on 25th – 27th August 2019



Photo: shutterstock.com

Impressum

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Text: Dr. Claudia Peters, Bodo Bahr
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