German Presidency
of the Council of the Baltic Sea States
2011/2012 Programme of work

20 years of the Council of the Baltic Sea States:
pioneer of cooperation and symbol of regional identity
in the Baltic Sea Region
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PRIORITY OF THE GERMAN PRESIDENCY

The German Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Council and of numerous other fora for cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. Over this time, the Council has done a great deal towards achieving the aim it set itself: “to recreate a genuine democratic community around the Baltic Sea”. The Baltic Sea Region has undergone far-reaching change over these 20 years. When Poland and the Baltic States joined the EU in 2004, the scope for cooperation changed radically for the CBSS. Moreover, the Northern Dimension and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region gave Baltic cooperation a new dynamism as well as new formats. The Baltic Sea States Summit on 30/31 May 2012 will provide an opportunity to acknowledge these developments.

The German Presidency is committed to the decisions of the 2008 Baltic Sea States Summit in Riga on the reform of the Council and of the 2010 Baltic Sea States Summit in Vilnius on “Vision 2020 for the Baltic Sea Region”. It is determined to make progress on the five agreed long-term priorities (economic development, energy, environment and sustainability, education and culture and civil security and the human dimension). We want to make further progress on developing the ability of the CBSS and its Secretariat to design and implement concrete projects. The aim is a “coherent framework for cooperation” in the Baltic Sea Region which links the various fora for cooperation and promotes the emerging division of labour among the major actors. In this context, greater use is to be made of the Council’s potential in implementing the EU’s Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Germany intends to work closely with the EU and with Poland and Denmark, which will hold the EU Presidency during Germany’s Presidency of the CBSS. It is intended to bring together all players in Baltic cooperation, including the northern German Länder, at a “Baltic Day” in Berlin in spring 2012.

The fact that the Presidency will pass from Germany to Russia means that there is a good foundation for a programme of work oriented to the medium term. A programme to modernize the south-eastern Baltic Sea Region is intended to make the new profile of the reformed Council of the Baltic Sea States visible. One particular focus in this context will be the development of the Kaliningrad region and the surrounding area, which have special potential. A joint initiative to promote public-private partnerships is to provide incentives for the development of the Baltic Sea Region and for private investment.

The CBSS has played a key role in the formation of the large number of networks that exist in the Baltic Sea Region. It must continue in this role. It is better suited than any other format to strengthening the Baltic region’s shared identity and increasing the people’s identification with the region, its history and its culture. Germany intends to contribute to these efforts.

1 Quoted from the Declaration of the first Conference of Foreign Ministers of the CBSS, Copenhagen, 5/6 March 1992
Within the scope of the five long-term priorities Germany will focus on the following:

I. LONG-TERM PRIORITY:

Maritime policy – the Baltic Sea Region as a model maritime region

An integrated maritime policy provides an excellent opportunity to link the strengthening of the Baltic maritime economy’s competitiveness, the protection of the marine environment and the interests of those who live and work on the coasts. The German Presidency wants to continue and intensify the work of the Expert Group on Maritime Policy in this respect.

Several of the fora for cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region now deal with maritime policy. The architecture of Baltic cooperation in this area, too, should be made more transparent and more efficient.

Work and events will therefore focus on:

- Intensifying the dialogue with organizations and initiatives dealing with maritime policy; promoting an exchange of experience with other maritime regions in Europe.
- Innovations to enhance competitiveness and repair damage done to the environment.
- A workshop on the development of cross-sector, integrative projects that serve as models for proving the added value of Baltic Sea Regional cooperation in practice, e.g. in the field of maritime spatial planning.
- Further development of the database and the interactive communication platform on the internet.
- Support for economic and scientific organizations that have joined forces to promote technological innovations (maritime clusters).
- Support for cooperation on research and science in the Baltic Sea Region in connection with the European Commission’s BONUS programme to promote joint research in the Baltic Sea Region.

Transport and logistics as a basis for a competitive economy in the Baltic Sea Region

Over the next few years the transport and logistics sector in the Baltic Sea Region will come under great pressure to adapt. Due to new environmental regulations (ships’ emissions, electricity supply, treatment of ships’ waste) we have to think about issues such as future-oriented ships’ engines and the use of LNG as well as energy, supply and waste disposal concepts that affect competition between transport providers in and outside the Baltic Sea Region. These issues are part of the activities of the incipient transport and logistics partnership of the Northern Dimension and of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, priority areas 4 (clean shipping) and 11 (internal and external transport links), as well as of numerous EU projects including “Cleanship” and “Innoship”. During our Presidency of the CBSS, we intend to hold events on these topics, for example within the scope of the 9th Baltic Transport Forum and the 4th Branch Conference Logistics Industry, which will be taking place at around the same time as the “Baltic Future” maritime trade fair in Rostock in early May 2012.

Spatial development policy – the Baltic Sea Region as a model for territorial cohesion and maritime spatial planning

In 2009 the Spatial Planning Ministers of the Baltic Sea States adopted the VASAB Long-Term Perspective for the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region (LTP), which had been drafted on the initiative of the CBSS. Implementing this concept and the Territorial Agenda of the European Union, which was decided in May 2011, will give a good chance of strengthening the region’s development potential and reducing territorial disparities. At the same time, we need to develop or expand principles for spatial planning in the Baltic Sea ourselves. The Baltic Sea Region can become a model for territorial cohesion and maritime spatial planning.
The focal point of work under the German Presidency will be the implementation of the VASAB Long-Term Perspective for the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region (LTP), particularly in the following fields:

- Improving the prerequisites for linking energy networks and making use of the potential of renewable energies (in cooperation with BASREC).
- Developing common principles for maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea States (in cooperation with HELCOM and the CBSS Expert Group on Maritime Policy).
- Helping to implement the European Union’s Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, especially the horizontal activities “develop and complete land-based spatial planning” and “maritime spatial planning”.
- Promoting city networks and urban-rural co-operations.
- Improving accessibility and multimodal transport.
- Intensifying and stabilizing cooperation with Russia.

The following measures, projects and events are among those planned:

- Continuation of the Joint VASAB-HELCOM Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group and participation in BaltSeaPlan projects.
- Joint conferences to intensify territorial cohesion in cooperation with the transnational projects Baltic Sea Labour Network (15/16 November 2011) and NewBridges (30 November/1 December 2011) in Hamburg and with Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (Szczecin, 5-7 October 2011).
- Participation in the Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in Gdansk from 24-27 October 2011 and the Annual Forum of Strategic Planning in Russia (St. Petersburg, 17/18 December 2011).

**Strengthening cooperation in the tourism sector**

The development and expansion of cooperation structures in the tourism sector and a sustainable development strategy are elements of priority area 12 “Tourism” of the Action Plan of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region; this priority area is coordinated by Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. It also includes the development of tourism in rural areas, particularly coastal regions, as well as the further development of the tourism potential of the cultural heritage and landscapes, in cooperation with partners from south-west Finland, Pomerania and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

Plans during the German Presidency of the CBSS include a central tourism-focused event towards the end of 2011 or perhaps another event held in cooperation with the Baltic Sea Tourism Forum in the first half of 2012. The themes are joint marketing of the region, the development of a sustainable tourism strategy and measures to strengthen the Baltic Sea Region’s attractiveness for tourism with Russian involvement.
II. LONG-TERM PRIORITY:

Sustainable development and environmental protection as guiding principles for economic and social development in the Baltic Sea Region.

Promoting sustainable development is a special priority of cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. The incorporation of the Baltic 21 process established in 1996 into the structures of the CBSS gave the Council’s work fresh impetus. The aim is to make the Baltic Sea Region’s economy greener and to progress implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. In particular, the challenges posed by climate change are to be addressed. Against the background of continuing climate change, marine pollution and the extinction of species, green economic growth aims to reorient industrial societies to an environmentally-friendly approach. Cooperation takes up from the ongoing flagship projects of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and is intended to close the gaps which remain despite the valuable efforts that have been made under the regional Baltic 21 agenda and on sustainable development processes. Germany, along with Poland, will organize the concluding conference in Gdynia (Poland) from 15-18 November 2011.

- The project “Baltic 21 EcoRegion” aims to strengthen sustainable development throughout the Baltic Sea Region by supporting the development of model regions (towns and regions) in the Baltic 21 sectors (e.g. industry, education, energy, transport). Walking the line between economic growth (economy) and environmental concerns (ecology) is the challenge here. EcoRegion is a flagship project of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and is intended to close the gaps which remain despite the valuable efforts that have been made under the regional Baltic 21 agenda and on sustainable development processes. Germany, along with Poland, will organize the concluding conference in Gdynia (Poland) from 15-18 November 2011.

- Bioenergy has become a major sector of the economy in the Baltic Sea Region. The further development of renewable energies is unavoidable as a political consequence of the nuclear disaster in Japan. In the project Bioenergy Promotion, scientists, authorities and bioenergy producers in various Baltic Sea States are working together to draw up principles and criteria for the sustainable production and use of biomass. Germany and Poland will together host a workshop on sustainable business models for the use of bioenergy in Poznan (Poland) from 22-25 November 2011.

- The project SPIN (sustainable production through innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises) helps to promote the transnational use of innovations in environmental technology, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises. SPIN is intended to sustainably improve the range of eco-innovations on offer by coupling supply and demand, to identify economic incentives for small and medium-sized enterprises and to improve the economic and political framework. Germany and Poland will jointly organize the concluding conference in Poznan (Poland) from 22-25 November 2011.
III. LONG-TERM PRIORITY:

Energy cooperation

Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation (BASREC), in which all CBSS Member States are represented, is the central energy forum for the Baltic Sea States. It aims to enhance energy security in the region and to boost energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy through multilateral cooperation. At the same time, the forum provides an important platform for dialogue between Europe and Russia on energy policy issues. BASREC finances concrete energy projects (e.g. feasibility studies or symposia) which provide new insights into the development of wind energy or CCS, for instance, and which are intended to lead to an overall energy policy strategy for the region by 2020. BASREC is in close touch with the European Commission on the subject of linking the Baltic to the European energy market.

From July 2011 it will be Germany’s turn to hold the Presidency of BASREC for a year. The results of the energy projects, with a budget of a million euro for the period 2009-2011, will be presented at a conference of Energy Ministers in Berlin planned for the spring of 2012.

Adaptation to climate change

The repercussions of climate change in the Baltic Sea Region are becoming tangible. There is a lack of information and research findings on the impact of climate change, climate susceptibility and the cost-benefit relation of adaptation measures in the Baltic. Existing information is not networked, and there is no efficient exchange between individual sectors and decision-makers. The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region addresses this problem and calls for a Baltic Sea Region-wide climate change adaptation strategy. Germany is involved with partners from seven Baltic Sea States in the EU-funded project BALTADAPT, which is developing a climate change adaptation strategy for the whole region. In addition, the Baltic Sea States receive advice and support for the launch of their own national climate change adaptation strategies under an advisory project financed by Germany.

During our Presidency of the CBSS, we intend to hold a climate conference in cooperation with the Baltic Sea States in autumn 2011 or spring 2012.

Intensifying cooperation with Russia

Concrete initiatives on the promotion of eco-innovations, public-private partnerships, environmental education (Kalinigrad) or ports cooperation (St. Petersburg) are to be developed in dialogue. Cooperation on sustainable development is also planned (Petrozavodsk).
IV. LONG-TERM PRIORITY:

Education and culture as identity-building factors in the Baltic Sea Region

Promoting encounters among young people has long been a key element of the activities of the CBSS. Art and culture have an important role to play in the dynamic development of the Baltic Sea Region. What is more, cooperation on culture and youth policy also helps to promote a Baltic regional identity.

Conference “Education and Young People in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region”

Education is one of the most important foundations for competitiveness and prosperity in the Baltic Sea Region. So the matter is a top priority in both the CBSS long-term priority Economy and in the Action Plan to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. To further explore this field of cooperation, a conference in Hamburg on “Education and Young People” is planned for the first half of 2012; the conference falls within priority area 12 (Education) of the Action Plan to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, which is coordinated by the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg. The most relevant issues in the Baltic Sea Region include the organization of vocational training in schools and companies (dual system), education for sustainable development, education regions, monitoring of education and transitions at educational interfaces. These issues will be discussed at the conference by experts from throughout the Baltic Sea Region.

A “cultural marketplace” running in parallel will give projects, higher education institutions and other players the chance to present themselves and to exchange views and experience. A kick-off event for the new “ARS BALTICA Youth” label involving young people from throughout the region will complement the programme.

Baltic Media Forum

The Baltic Media Forum was established in 2003 by Norddeutscher Rundfunk (the northern German state broadcasting company) and the Academia Baltica to promote and develop the shared regional identity in the Baltic Sea Region. Traditionally this media event focuses on media cooperation and new projects as well as on the discussion of current policy issues in Baltic cooperation.

The 5th Baltic Media Forum, which is to look at Baltic Sea Regional cooperation over the past twenty years and draw conclusions for the future, will take place in Schleswig-Holstein in March 2012.

Reorientation of cultural cooperation

The establishment of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture opens up new possibilities for cultural cooperation which could also put previous activities in the CBSS onto a more sustainable footing. Germany wants to exploit this potential. A meeting of the Senior Officials Group for Culture to which representatives of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture will also be invited will consider the possibilities for closer networking of cultural activities. The meeting will be held in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania at the same time as the “Nordischer Klang” cultural festival.
**EuroFaculties**

The EuroFaculties are an education project launched by the CBSS with the aim of adapting university education in the Baltic Sea States and Russia to modern research and teaching standards. Successful projects have been run in Riga, Tartu, Vilnius (1993-2005) and Kaliningrad (2000-2007). There is currently another EuroFaculty in Pskov (north-west Russia). During our Presidency we hope to secure and consolidate both the results obtained so far and the development of the Bachelor degree courses which was one of the goals of the project.

**Ring of partner schools in the Baltic Sea Region**

This initiative dates back to the CBSS Summit in Riga in June 2008. The aim is to develop a “ring of partner schools” around the Baltic in order to strengthen cooperation between schools in the Baltic Sea States and to foster the development of a shared Baltic identity. There are now 227 schools in the network. We will continue the project, which has also been taken up in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. A number of events are planned in 2011 and 2012, including encounters between school pupils, language camps, teachers’ seminars and a history project.

**Creation of a coherent framework for cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region**

The 20th anniversary of the Council of the Baltic Sea States provides an opportunity to take an in-depth scientific look at its work and achievements and to identify directions for future development. To this end, the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik – German Institute for International and Security Affairs will organize a scientific symposium to find stimuli for the further development of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and for the creation of a coherent framework for Baltic Sea Regional cooperation in association with the Northern Dimension and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

**Baltic Sea history project**

Tackling a shared history which has, however, been experienced differently promotes mutual understanding and a shared identity. Germany will seek to further this by supporting the Baltic Sea History Project of the Academia Baltica. The project is to produce a virtual history book for the Baltic Sea region which illustrates the cultural and historical aspects the Baltic Regions and States have in common whilst not ignoring areas of conflict. The project is targeted above all at children and young adults as well as teachers and other multipliers in the education sector. An international scientific advisory board will support the project. Events are planned as part of the ARS BALTICA 20th anniversary celebrations and at the Schleswig-Holstein representation in Berlin in the first half of 2012.
V. LONG-TERM PRIORITY:

The Council of the Baltic Sea States has in the past concentrated on protecting children and young people against sexual exploitation and on developing measures to prevent human trafficking.

**Protection of children and young people**

As of July 2011 Germany will assume the chair of the Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk (EGCC), which seeks ways to protect children against exploitation and abuse.

The first event under Germany’s chairmanship of the EGCC will be an international congress on “Early prevention – getting access, establishing a relationship, developing structures” in Berlin on 12 and 13 September 2011.

The congress will focus on the problem of getting access to at-risk families with infants and young children, on risk assessment and on help structures for troubled parents.

**Combating human trafficking**

During the German Presidency, the Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) will continue the projects initiated under the Norwegian Presidency. Under the motto “Strengthening cooperation: learning from one another – cooperating with one another – together finding solutions”, we want to show that human trafficking can only be countered in the long term if the various actors in the region work together. In particular, we will push the project on the collection of regional data and the development of training measures to fight human trafficking for forced labour (DEFLECT project), which started in June 2011.

**Youth work in the CBSS**

While Germany holds the chair of the CBSS Expert Group on Youth Affairs (EGYA), the prime focus will be on the mobility of young volunteers. Cooperation between the Baltic Sea States on volunteer mobility is to be strengthened, in particular in the framework of the Federal Voluntary Service for volunteers from the Baltic Sea States in Germany and within the scope of existing structures for German volunteers in the Baltic Sea States.

A Baltic Youth Conference on “The situation and future of volunteers and voluntary organizations in the Baltic Sea Region” in Mözen (Schleswig-Holstein) from 30 September to 7 October 2011 will take up this focus. Similarly, the EGYA meeting in Berlin on 11 and 12 October 2011 will be concentrating on “Cross-border volunteering”.

**Development of the Baltic Sea Region as a model in the health sector**

The Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS), which also coordinates the relevant priority area of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, is the most important framework for cooperation in the health sector today.

The main player in furthering networking through cooperation on the life sciences and health economy in the Baltic Sea Region and in forming a macroregion in the field of health is ScanBalt, which was launched by Medicon Valley Academy, BioCon Valley® and Bio-Turku as a network of networks, and which currently has 67 members from the EU Baltic States, Russia, Norway and the Netherlands. ScanBalt is a strategic partner of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. During its Presidency, Germany will advance this existing cooperation and organize as a key event the 10th ScanBalt Forum in Heringsdorf on 24 September 2011 under the motto “10 Years ScanBalt BioRegion – Towards a Balanced Development and Smart Specialization in the Baltic Sea Region”. There are also plans for a workshop on the ScanBalt Health Region
flagship project within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

**Development of the civil protection and disaster control network in the Baltic Sea Region**

In 2011/2012 the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg will chair the Civil Protection Network of the Baltic Sea States, which was created in 2002. With support from the CBSS Secretariat, the Network maintains an intensive exchange at national level in the fields of disaster preparedness, risk analysis, crisis management and protection of critical infrastructure. These activities will continue under the German Presidency and the Network will be further expanded.

The development of a flagship project within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region to reinforce protection from major emergencies at sea and on land, which began under the Norwegian Presidency, will continue with Hamburg in the chair. The planned joint training courses and exercises will enhance cooperation and promote preparedness. As well as regular working meetings, there will be a Senior Expert Meeting in Stockholm early in 2012, and the 10th Baltic Sea States Civil Protection Directors-General Meeting will be held in Hamburg in May/June 2012.
Since 1992, the Council of the Baltic Sea States has provided an intergovernmental platform for regional cooperation. It receives strategic guidance from Baltic Sea States Summits or Ministerial meetings.

On this basis, the CBSS Secretariat, located in Stockholm, develops network- and project-based activities, aimed at improving the status of the Baltic Sea Region as one of the most successful in the world. The Council focuses on five priority areas:

- Economic Development
- Energy
- Environment & Sustainability
- Education & Culture
- Civil Security & Human Dimension

The Members of the Council are the eleven states of the Baltic Sea Region as well as the European Commission:

- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- Germany
- Iceland
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Norway
- Poland
- the Russian Federation
- Sweden
- the European Commission