

RESOLUTION
of the digital 39th Session of the Baltic Assembly

The Baltic Assembly,

having convened for its digital 39th Session on 6 November 2020;

having discussed the results of the Estonian presidency of the Baltic Assembly, social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and lessons learned, strategic vision for recovery and growth, cooperation in security and defence, the implementation of joint energy and transport projects;

recognising that the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic put solidarity of the Baltic states to the rigorous test and revealed vulnerability in trilateral cooperation and **welcoming** the ability of the Baltic states to esteem the power of cooperation, start timely information exchange and joint coordination of emergency measures in the region;

expressing strong conviction that the cooperation of the Baltic states remains the cornerstone in tackling crisis-imposed challenges and **welcoming** close coordination between the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers in safeguarding and representing common interests of the Baltic states;

understanding that the COVID-19 crisis has long-lasting negative impact on economies and societies and **underlining** the need to elaborate an ambitious and coordinated approach for overcoming the crisis and envisage post-crisis measures aimed at reducing negative impact on economies, security, social sphere and employment in the Baltic states;

urging to reach the qualitative and timely agreement on the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021–2027 ensuring stable flow of EU investments and **aspiring** to continue large-scale transport, infrastructure and energy projects of the Baltic states to strengthen security, develop regional connectivity and better integrate Baltic states into Europe;

highlighting that the funding of the European Commission allocated to member states in scope of Recovery Plan for Europe must be invested wisely and in line with digital agenda and European Green Deal guidelines;

recognising the importance of digital technologies in the transformation of the economies and societies of the Baltic states and **underlining** the need to intensify efforts to foster the digitalisation and the development of the digital economy;

continuing to condemn all attempts to use history as a propaganda weapon and **appreciating** the Welles Declaration by the US Department of State and the policy of non-recognition of 23 July 1940;

emphasising the need to maintain NATO's defensive posture in the Baltic region through training and exercise, increasing interoperability among the four multinational NATO battlegroups, enhancing regional air and developing naval defence capabilities, and financing military mobility infrastructure projects, including harbours, which are vital for security and defence of the Baltic states;

reiterating that NATO remains guarantor of the collective defence of the Baltic states, its presence being a strong deterrent, and the transatlantic link is of vital strategic importance for the future security and stability of Europe;

declaring readiness to continue supporting and developing the Eastern Partnership and to maintain parliamentary support for the strengthening of democratic principles in the governance of Eastern Partnership countries, considering, in particular, the current situation in Belarus;

calls on the parliaments and governments of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, as well as the Baltic Council of Ministers:

in regard to the defence cooperation of the Baltic states:

- to coordinate defence plans and strategies that enhance regional interoperability and improve collective contingency response;
- keeping in mind as imperative the interoperability to develop regional approach to the air defence and air defence capabilities of the Baltic states;
- to enhance regional, fully interoperable naval cooperation of the Baltic states, operating in conjunction with common equipment and sensor and weapon systems under one combined command;
- based on positive experience of the Baltic states regarding joint procurements in health care, to facilitate intergovernmental negotiations, conclude a trilateral agreement and establish a common system for joint military procurements;
- to invest in and develop transport infrastructure, with special focus on Rail Baltica, thus increasing technical requirements for the existing infrastructure capabilities in North Sea-Baltic Corridor of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) for military movement;
- to develop military mobility infrastructure and procedures and raise awareness of European and transatlantic partners in regard to the military mobility and military mobility infrastructure capabilities;
- to assess wind park impact to airspace surveillance in the future;
- to develop cross-border coordination to effectively enhance cooperation in cybersecurity;

in regard to cooperation in the field of disaster prevention, preparedness and response, crisis management and civil protection:

- to facilitate timely exchange of information regarding crisis situation in the Baltic states and ensure that agencies in the Baltic states responsible for emergency operations exchange relevant crisis-related information promptly in order to facilitate better planning and coordination for future necessitated lockdowns;
- to keep monitoring epidemiological situation, facilitate timely exchange of information and experience between competent agencies in order to improve 3B crisis management capacities and disaster preparedness;
- to encourage 3B governments and respective ministries to continue good cooperation in restraining possible second wave of COVID – 19 and even closer cooperation should second wave occur;
- to strengthen cooperation between regional specialist networks dealing with disease prevention and control;
- to ensure implementation of Agreement on Cooperation in Disaster Response in the Baltic states, which was ratified by the national parliaments in 2018 and discuss within framework of 3B working group possibility of concluding operational agreements;
- considering lessons learned, to elaborate common Baltic comprehensive crisis preparedness strategy in health care and social field to be ready for pandemics in the future;
- to elaborate common approach and understanding of planned activities and mutual cross-border coordination mechanism in case of escalation of security situation;

- to eliminate gaps in regard to civil protection and disaster preparedness in cross-border cooperation of the Baltic states;
- to develop joint emergency plans in border regions of the Baltic states and ensure training of health care providers to enhance their readiness to work in crisis and emergency situations;

in regard to external border control and management:

- to sign the Agreement on cross-border cooperation between the State Border Guard of the Republic of Latvia and the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board;

in regard to the cooperation in health care sector:

- to estimate potential impact of COVID-19 pandemic in health care and social sector, from the point of cross-sectoral and cross-border regions preparedness and regional coordination;
- to eliminate obstacles to 3B common E-Health network and ensure compatibility of systems and proper health data exchange;
- to continue joint procurements of medicine, develop a strategy and publish a plan of joint procurements, and harmonise the list of joint procurements (vaccines, chemotherapy drugs, medicine for rare diseases etc.);
- based on the positive experience in the joint procurements of vaccines, responsible agencies are to take stock of crisis reserves in the Baltic states and negotiate promptly joint procurements of protective gear and medical supplies, coordinating to that end 3B procurement cycles, if necessary, and taking into account the possibilities in the framework of the EU joint procurement agreement;

in regard to the economic cooperation of the Baltic states:

- to discuss and agree about thematic focus of joint projects within framework of the EU territorial programme 2021–2027;
- to start discussions on a common approach towards crowdfunding regulations and cryptocurrency markets;
- based on the positive experience and results of the Baltic Innovation Fund I and II, to start negotiations about development of the Baltic Innovation Fund III;
- to expand cooperation in the tourism sector in the Baltic region by creating a strategic vision on target markets and tourist flows;
- to explore possibilities of the Baltic states in development of the joint airline company;

in regard to the digital cooperation of the Baltic states:

- to facilitate moving towards a digital single market of the Baltic states by identifying and eliminating legislative and administrative obstacles;
- to agree on 3B common data standards, lists of data to exchange and ensure digital data exchange and interoperability via already existing different platforms or seeking a common platform;
- create suitable conditions and a balanced playing field for digital networks and innovative services;
- aiming to reduce the administrative burden to citizens and businesses to start negotiations about the Single Digital Gateway areas most relevant in a wider 3B and Baltic – Nordic context in order to ensure cross-border services, data exchange and realisation of *Once Only Principle*, (cross-border KYC; e-CMR; ID documents data verification for AML purposes);
- to introduce e-invoicing in the Baltic states;
- to agree on a common regional approach and overcome obstacles in using Real-Time Economy;

- to better coordinate activities and strengthen common approach regarding cybersecurity;

in regard to circular economy:

- to analyse possibilities to establish a joint waste packaging system in the Baltic states;
- to launch joint projects to recycle used textiles, especially synthetics by involving researchers and businesses;
- to agree on a common approach and measures to eliminate “waste tourism”;

in regard to the development of renewable energy projects:

- to agree about a regional approach of the Baltic states in regard to development of renewable energy projects;
- to elaborate and sign an intergovernmental Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Estonia and the Republic of Latvia regarding possible offshore wind energy project if necessary;

in regard to the common electricity and gas market of the Baltic states:

- to continue coordination of activities towards a common regional electricity and gas market of the Baltic states;
- to continue the technical implementation of synchronization of the Baltic electricity networks with the continental European network;

in regard to the implementation of the Rail Baltica project:

- to continue implementation of the Rail Baltica project by ensuring timely implementation, efficient infrastructure management and preventing increase in the total expenditure of the project;

in regard to new partnerships in education, science and research:

- to start negotiations about conclusion of the new Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Estonia, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia by elaborating a new cooperation vision and strategy by formulating priorities and objectives, areas and topics for the cooperation of the Baltic states in education, research and innovation for a period of 2021 – 2027, improving academic recognition and removing regulative obstacles;
- to explore the possibility of concentrating the resources and expertise of scientists and PhD students of the Baltic states and strengthening existing joint initiatives to enhance the quality of research, improve academic recognition, encourage cooperation between institutions and boost mobility, thus increasing the overall scientific competitiveness of the region;
- to develop coordinated approach of the Baltic states for common challenges in increasing scientific capacity and excellence in the Baltic research area;
- to enable potential the cooperation with the CERN provides to the development of science, research and technology in the Baltic states and allocate corresponding financial support within the State budgets which should be equal on the national level to the amount of membership paid to the CERN;
- to consider possibility to establish CERN Internship Programme for the students of the Baltic states;

in regard to cultural cooperation and minimizing environmental footprint:

- welcoming positive developments in the cultural cooperation of the Baltic states and appreciating implemented and ongoing cross-cultural projects, to establish joint web-based platform about cultural events of the Baltic states in national languages and English thus

facilitating cultural exchange, international branding and cultural communication of the Baltic states;

- considering impact of the climate change, underlining the importance of joint approach and emphasizing the need to promote environmental awareness-raising among the public, to agree about set of principles and requirements to be applied when organising joint bilateral or trilateral cultural events of the Baltic states to minimize environmental footprint;
- to agree about common approach of the Baltic states by moving towards refusal of fireworks, balloons, plastic confetti and other environmentally harmful activities;
- based on the approach of the Nordic countries, to explore possibilities to apply international marketing and communication strategy for the Baltic Region.

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