



Report of the 28th Session of the Baltic Assembly, the 15th Baltic Council 26 – 28 November 2009, Vilnius

1. Presiding officers of the Session :

- **Dr Mantas Adomėnas**, President of the Baltic Assembly, Chairman of the BA Lithuanian delegation
- **Mr Trivimi Velliste**, Vice President of the Baltic Assembly, Chairman of the BA Estonian delegation
- **Mrs Ērika Zommere**, Vice President of the Baltic Assembly, Chair of the BA Latvian delegation

2. Agenda of the Session

- Opening of the Session
- 15th Baltic Council
- Signing of the Joint Statement of the 15th Baltic Council
- First panel discussion “Agenda, priorities and the way ahead: Baltic cooperation institutions by 2020. *Added value of Baltic cooperation: agenda, priorities and the way ahead?*”
- Second panel discussion “Baltic cooperation and crisis: in quest of security, sustainability and growth. *How to ensure stability in the Baltic region in long-term perspective: Baltic solutions. Economic, social and education dimensions?*”
- Adoption of BA-GUAM PA Joint Statement
- Report of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly
- Reports of the BA Committees on the activities in 2009 and priorities for 2010, and introduction to the draft documents and their adoption
- Adoption of the Statement concerning support for stability and development in the GUAM participating states, Declaration concerning proposals related to the solution of the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh, and the Declaration on the situation in Georgia
- Adoption of the Final document of the 28th BA Session
- Election of the President and Vice Presidents of the Baltic Assembly 2010
- Election of Chairpersons and Vice Chairpersons of the BA Committees

- Speech by the newly elected President of the Baltic Assembly
- Signing of the Final document of the 28th BA Session

Opening of the Session

Dr. Mantas Adomėnas, President of the Baltic Assembly, on behalf of the Baltic Assembly welcomed Speakers of the Seimas, Saeima and Riigikogu - H.E. Mrs. Irena Degutienė, H.E. Mr. Gundars Daudze, H.E. Mrs. Ene Ergma to the 28th Session of the Baltic Assembly.

The Lithuanian presidency has been marked by intense work in social, education and research field, energy and business field. Special attention has been paid to new security agendas of the Baltic region. Results of discussions can be found in the submitted recommendations and resolutions. The year has been very important for the relations with the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly. On 19 June in Vilnius the Joint Cooperation Declaration was signed, which identifies cooperation priorities and formats for the Baltic and GUAM parliamentary cooperation. Dr Adomėnas welcomed H.E. Mr. David Bakradze, the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, to the Session.

In 2009 the 20th Anniversary of the Baltic Way was marked, and during the Session parliamentarians of the Baltic States will evaluate the activities of the Baltic cooperation institutions by setting agenda, priorities and goals for 2020. Best solutions will be sought for the Baltic cooperation under financial crisis by trying to find what joint steps on parliamentary, governmental and non-governmental level must be taken to ensure security, sustainability and growth of the Baltic region. During the crisis many activities, projects, and institutions have been doubted and put under a question mark. Also within the Baltic Assembly serious and essential discussions on the form, format and agenda of the Baltic parliamentary cooperation have been initiated. The question is not on whether to be or not to be, but on the best parliamentary cooperation format that would serve as instrument to follow the Baltic parliamentary cooperation in the most efficient and influential way leading to the solution of problems and promotion of welfare and competitiveness of the countries.

Dr Adomėnas noted that the Session is represented by the participants from the Foreign Affairs Committees of the Baltic parliaments, the Nordic Council and the Benelux Parliament.

H.E. Mrs. Irena Degutienė, Speakers of the Seimas, welcomed all the representatives to the 28th Session of the Baltic Assembly, and expressed a hope that open discussions and diversity of opinions will facilitate the communication and work discussing the present and the future of the states. The tradition of the Baltic Assembly has been continued for 20 years now. The

objectives of historic sovereignty identified under the Soviet occupation were achieved a long time ago. As a result, there is a question of whether this parliamentary forum of the Baltic States is still needed. Can it make a practical influence on the life of Baltic people? Perhaps the Baltic Assembly has already accomplished its historical mission? Should it retain its current form or undergo a reform and look for a new scope of activity that is more closely related to the challenges of today? H.E. Mrs. Irena Degutienė assured that the Assembly can and must continue to function by undergoing a quality renewal, reacting to current realities of life, and responding to newly emerging problems. Some problems have not been solved, for example, the lack of unity among the Baltic States, when the competition had overshadowed the cooperation. Baltic States have the same interests in all strategic issues of international policy and economy. She underlined that the benefit or progress of one country becomes of benefit to the entire region, while the problems of one state directly affect the quality of life or security of others. It is necessary to continue tangible and dynamic activities of closer integration. The Assembly should become the initiator of joint projects of the Baltic States, which generates modern ideas of cooperation. The voice of the Baltic Assembly should become significant when addressing strategic issues, its decisions should not be symbolic and recommendatory, but especially binding. Efforts for strengthening the dialogue among the Parliaments of the Baltic States and new forms of interaction between the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers are welcome. In order to avoid a standstill, the Baltic Assembly should set strategic objectives, formulate medium-term projects, define the criteria for efficient activities, and consistently follow its goals. In the international arena, the Baltic Assembly should coordinate mutual actions in the EU institutions, and propose a common Baltic vision on various issues essential for the development of the entire EU. The Baltic Assembly can give a number of stimuli in forming the common foreign policy on the basis of experience of close and historically proven cooperation among the Nordic countries. This approach would promote the development of the Baltic States as an integral community which sees security, economic or political problems of one state as common problems of all the Baltic States. For this purpose the Assembly should further strengthen its ties not only with the Nordic Council but also with respective parliamentary fora of the Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development and the Benelux countries in order to learn from and share the experience of joint activities, and to ensure a more efficient network of parliamentary relations between the EU and partner countries in the Eastern neighbourhood. H.E. Mrs. Irena Degutienė invited to discuss openly and work in solidarity making use of as much potential as possible.

H.E. Mr. Gundars Daudze, Speaker of the Saeima, on behalf of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia greeted all the participants of the Session of the Baltic Assembly. The Session is the

time when to discuss the future development of the Baltic States and the entire Baltic region, to talk over better ways for representing the interests of the Baltic states in the European Union, to consider common challenges in the region, in the Nordic countries, and in Europe, and to look for cooperation opportunities with other regions. H.E. Mr. Gundars Daudze noted his pleasure to be again in Vilnius, where it has been possible this year to enjoy emotional and poignant moments during the solemn events held to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Baltic Way, in which the Baltic Assembly also took active part. On the days when the 20th anniversary was celebrated, the peoples of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia once again united themselves in a joint action – a run for Baltic unity called Heartbeats for the Baltics – and in shared memories about the events that took place 20 years ago, when in the Baltic Way these nations showed the strength of Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians to be able to unite for the sake of a common goal. To honour this unique event, various solemn events were held elsewhere in the world, by that reminding people about the history of the Baltic States, proving ability to overcome the current economic difficulties, and proposing the vision of the future of Europe and key challenges in the region.

The Session will focus on joint action and solutions to the problems and tasks set by the current reality in the Baltic region and worldwide, - the cooperation under economic crisis for ensuring stability and security, cooperation regarding energy issues, social sector, health care, and other areas. He noted that the Baltic Assembly will soon be 20 years old, and it is one of the first joint institutions of the newly restored independent Baltic States. Back then, after the recovery of independence by Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, the Baltic nations were only studying what democracy is. Then they have gained experience and have become more rational and more experienced also in cooperating among each other. The Baltic Assembly, which back then was uniting people emotionally and spiritually, has now become a tool for political and economic cooperation. H.E. Mr. Gundars Daudze stressed that jointly we are able to solve the social and economic problems caused by the global economic crisis.

The Baltic Assembly was established 20 years ago in order for the voice of young democracies to be heard in the global arena. The situation has since changed, and the role of the Baltic Assembly has also changed. While 20 years ago the main task was to draw attention to the Baltic States, now we are speaking about specific aims to be achieved as a result of the interparliamentary cooperation. Several significant areas of activity for the Baltic Assembly can be identified: 1) increasingly close cooperation between the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council in building on previously laid positive groundwork and collaborating with the neighbours in the Nordic countries by taking a unified stance on various issues concerning entire Europe; 2) more effective cooperation between the Baltic Assembly as a form of parliamentary cooperation and the Baltic Council of Ministers, which will ensure a unified opinion of the

legislative and executive branch in both political and economic issues; and 3) ensuring a closer cooperation with regional partners, especially with the GUAM countries. In conclusion H.E. Mr. Gundars Daudze expressed to achieve a clear vision of future tasks, and invited to the Session next year in Riga.

H.E. Mrs. Ene Ergma, President of the Riigikogu, on behalf of the Estonian Parliament welcomed everyone to the Session. On 22 August 2009 in cooperation between all three Baltic States the 20th Anniversary of the Baltic Way was celebrated in Tallinn, when the Baltic Assembly's medals were passed and the Freedom Fire was lighted. The direct political result of the Baltic Way is the Baltic Assembly – the cooperation format between Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian Parliaments. The successful cooperation of the Baltic States' parliaments during 18 years has been proven by accession to the Euro-Atlantic institutions, however, the time has changed and the new challenges have been set. The political, economic stability and success of each of the Baltic State is an essential part for the success of all three Baltic countries. It is important to strengthen the Baltic cooperation ties by shaping the EU and NATO initiatives and policies based on strategic interests of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. H.E. Mrs. Ene Ergma noted that today we cannot only resume to festive addresses, as the global financial crisis and the economic recession has left no one untouched. The first signs of improvement are arising, however the painful budget cuts that have touched all the vital areas cannot be left without attention. The volume of the GDP in the majority of EU countries has fallen back to the years 2005-2006. Hence it is necessary to review together the cooperation format of the Baltic Assembly, whether it corresponds to the current demands and possibilities. The initiation of the Baltic Assembly to cut the budget of 2010 by 17% is a step in the right direction, but also the content of the Baltic Assembly must be changed to a more effective and visible one to its citizens. One of the possibilities is to transfer from the format of delegations to a closer cooperation between parliamentary committees. H.E. Mrs. Ene Ergma wished the Baltic Assembly to undergo a successful reform and acquire as good ideas as 20 years ago.

H.E. Mr. David Bakradze, Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, on behalf of the Georgian Parliament of the state expressed his honour and gratitude to address the 28th Session of the Baltic Assembly. The Baltic States and Georgia are united by history that is a good foundation for mutual understanding. A significant unifying factor is also the future, values and aspirations. The Baltic countries are the model states for Georgia, - they are seen as a successful demonstration how much political and cultural events can advance and help countries to achieve their goals. The history has tested the Baltic endeavours and they have proved successful. H.E. Mr. David Bakradze congratulated on the successful 20th Anniversary of the Baltic Way, and

expressed hope that in the future there will be a successful cooperation in the region of GUAM countries. He noted that the Baltic Assembly is one of the most successful forms of regional cooperation and integration, from which the GUAM countries can learn a lot. Integration is always a difficult process, as among friends there are differences in vision, especially in the times of crisis with limited resources. But the Baltic States have demonstrated this continuous unity, and the fact that this is the 28th Session of the Baltic Assembly, demonstrates that this structure has gone through the time test. This gives an example what is necessary to be implemented in the GUAM region: how to be a successful country, how to build European democracy, how to strengthen security and regional cooperation. Speaking on behalf of GUAM, H.E. Mr. David Bakradze noted that GUAM has gone through a difficult time in searching for its regional identity. A part of GUAM's identity is the cooperation with the Baltic Assembly. In June 2009 the Declaration on cooperation between the Baltic Assembly and the GUAM PA was signed, which is an important step for GUAM countries to learn how to cooperate. There is a lot in common – security, stability, energy supply, economic cooperation. The delegation of the Baltic Assembly participated in the GUAM Session in November, which is a clear demonstration for political will and understanding to develop mutual cooperation. In conclusion, H.E. Mr. David Bakradze wished the Baltic Assembly to continue to be a model for GUAM countries – as small successful countries which can cooperate with each other and their neighbours, thus bringing more stability, security and prosperity to the people of the entire region.

The 15th Baltic Council

Dr. Mantas Adomėnas, President of the Baltic Assembly, noted that the 15th Baltic Council is taking place in a very challenging time. We face economical, social, climate, energy, foreign and other challenges to which Baltic parliaments and governments have to find solutions for. Not all issues can be solved by using common approaches and responses, however, there are many sectors in which the Baltic regional cooperation can be of great benefit. In 2009 the committees of the Baltic Assembly have worked on economic, environmental, social issues as well as on challenges in the area of energy, education and science. The committees have asked the 15th Baltic Council to present the following main conclusions: 1) in the area of education, science and research – to take joint initiative in starting negotiations with the European Commission for agreeing on preferential provisions in acquirement of the EU funds by recalling the term of co-financing and pre-financing for scientific projects, and to consider a possibility of not decreasing the available state funding for science in the state budgets; 2) in the area of joint Baltic health care system – to take joint steps for coordinated activities in health care sector, for example, by creating common Baltic system for medicine and medical supply procurement; 3) in the area of economic stabilisation – to develop joint strategies for sustainable development of the Baltic States in energy, communication and technologies, medicine, creative industries, transport and logistics, pharmacology and other fields which would ensure greater competitiveness of the Baltic States, and to develop harmonised business in the Baltic States by unifying fiscal, legislative and administrative norms in the Baltic States, and by developing new regulatory acts to diminish obstacles for innovative entrepreneurship; and 4) in the area of foreign and defence cooperation - to develop a holistic approach towards regional security, fight against regional crime, and efficient utilisation of available public instruments and assistance of the society, and to take active part in security and defence discussions by drafting new European and transatlantic security agendas.

H. E. Mr. Vygaudas Ušackas, Chairman of the Cooperation Council of the Baltic Council of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, noted that in the course of the past 20 years the Baltic States have successfully integrated into the world's economy, becoming members of Euro-Atlantic institutions. Today we are facing the challenges on 21st century in relation to growing competition in international markets, the economic crisis as well as the necessity to ensure energy security. The global economic depression has witnessed the basic necessity of close cooperation in economic and financial sector. It is needed to consolidate forces in seeking optimal solutions on how to control the budget deficit, preserve the stability of national currencies and attempt to introduce Euro as soon as possible. A long-term Economic

Development Strategy for the Baltic States should be based on the vision as part of the Baltic Sea region with the population of 150 million people and not on the vision of 7 million people in the three Baltic States.

One of the key priorities of cooperation of the Baltic States is granting energy independence, as several important regional projects in energy field have been started, and it is needed to implement the approved Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan and to establish a common transparent Baltic electricity market until 2013. Fight against climate change is another challenge. It is important to join forces in helping to consolidate the common EU position in seeking international agreements. Joint measures need to be taken to ensure high environmental standards and increase energy efficiency. There is a strong political will in the region to focus more on the cooperation of the Baltic Sea region.

The priority chosen by Latvia, the next year's presidency in the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers, is to strengthen relations with the Nordic countries. It is important to better use the potential of the Nordic countries' cooperation in the fields of research, innovation, and creation of knowledge society. This field is a significant priority of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region. Implementation of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy will demand close cooperation among the countries in the region and neighbours – Russia and Belarus.

Cooperation of the three Baltic countries in the field of defense has a strategic significance. For the first time Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia are participating in creating a new NATO Strategic Concept as full fledged members, and formally agree upon common position on essential issues: 1) collective defense has to remain the main task of the alliance in the future; 2) new security tasks have to be formulated by NATO policy, including energy security and cyber threat; 3) doors of NATO should be open to countries that comply with NATO membership requirements.

Lithuania's, Latvia's and Estonia's air space control mission that has been carried out by NATO for 5 years is the most obvious example of military presence of alliance in the region. The goal is to preserve this mission until 2018. On 21 April 2010, the tenth anniversary of the Vilnius Ten will be marked. Lithuanian, Estonian and Latvian foreign ministers jointly agreed that on this occasion foreign ministers of NATO member states and the Alliance's candidate countries would be invited to Vilnius to discuss the new NATO Strategic Concept and to note the importance of the continuity of NATO enlargement for the spread of freedom and democracy. The independence, security and stability of Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia and other countries of the Eastern Partnership set up the precondition for the security and stability in the entire Europe, not just in the three Baltic States. The war between Russia and Georgia in 2008 demonstrated the frailty of peace, and highlighted threats and risks. One of the responses to these threats is modernisation of Eastern partnership countries, implementation of democratic reforms based

on free market principles and allying with the EU. Our support to these countries is based on the synthesis of pragmatic interests, freedom and democracy values. Therefore the aspiration of the eastern partnership countries to closer associate with the EU by democratizing their societies, improving governance, making free market agreements, cooperating in energy field is very much supported.

The goal is also to encourage openness between Russian and Belorussian societies and respect the human rights and freedom. It is very important to facilitate communication which requires facilitated conditions of crossing the state borders. The Kaliningrad area due to its geographic and geopolitical situation could become a space for closer cooperation between the EU and Russia. Local traffic agreements will be signed for Belarus and Russia in 2010, and significantly facilitate the cross border travel conditions for border area population, and make travelling cheaper, at the same time preserve the necessary control in accordance with the Schengen requirements.

While creating statehood in 1918 and establishing the independence in 1990 the Baltic nations were guided by common democratic values. People demonstrated their solidarity to the world in the Baltic Way. Common values and history obliges us to foster the principles of democracy, independence, the rule of law, free market and free trade within the EU, NATO and other international organisations. H. E. Mr. Vygaudas Ušackas noted that we are facing important geopolitical changes, as the Treaty of Lisbon will come into force on 1 December, and the new NATO Strategic Concept is being prepared. The Baltic States would prefer to see the EU not only limiting itself to increasing its competitiveness, and NATO just strengthening its power and reliability. NATO should be seen not only as keeping doors open to Georgia and Ukraine, but also offering specific assistance to these countries in their aspiration to implement reforms on the way to Euro-Atlantic membership.

On behalf of the Baltic States H. E. Mr. Vygaudas Ušackas assured that the Baltic countries will continue being faithful supporters of Georgia in creating democracy, economic welfare and integration in the Euro-Atlantic family. A more structured institutional cooperation of the Baltic Assembly with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova and possibly Belarus in the future, could become an important pillar for the bridge that is being built towards the EU and NATO.

H.E. Mr. Māris Riekstiņš, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, expressed his honour to greet everyone at the 15th Baltic Council, and extended his gratitude to Lithuanian colleagues for the work done this year. In 2010 Latvia will assume presidency of the Baltic Council of Ministers. During the meeting of the Prime Ministers of the Baltic Council of Ministers on 5-6 November in Vilnius the following priorities were set: 1) economic stabilization and enhancing competitiveness; 2) security policy, including energy and environmental sector; and 3) promotion

of cooperation with the Nordic countries and other regions. Regarding economic priority, the year 2009 was a year of significant challenges. A couple of years ago Baltic States experienced huge economic growth. But the global financial crisis created additional challenge for the sustainability of economies. The current task is to achieve that the Baltic States ensure sustainable economic development to come up to Maastricht criteria and to join the Euro zone as soon as possible, thus minimizing the currency risks and cautiousness of investors. It is also needed to improve cooperation on tax policy issues and the attraction and the use of EU funds. In the energy sector, it is necessary to ensure greater market integration and openness. Adoption of the EU Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan on 17 June is a good framework for future work in the area. The first task is to open at least 35% of electricity market by April 2010. More efficient results in facilitation of the competitiveness of the region can be achieved if activities are coordinated and strategic decisions regarding energy projects according to the principle of equality of all partners are adopted.

Cooperation of the Baltic States on security issues has been excellent. A bright example is NATO air policing mission. Defence Ministries are jointly working on the report of further air policing. This achievement was a temporary solution and now it is necessary to work on long-term solutions regarding air policing mission. The new NATO Strategic Concept should reflect the basic tasks of alliance, including the collective defence in a changing security environment of the 21st century. It is very essential that the Baltic States have a single representative in the expert group on NATO Strategic Concept, thus ensuring the defence of interests of the region and inclusion of these interests in the NATO future plans.

Today the security area also covers environment. It is necessary to minimize climate change and mitigate negative impact on national, regional and global level. That will require transforming to low level emission economy and more efficient use of resources, and introduction of innovative technologies.

The cooperation of the Baltic States has changed, but the task has retained – to strengthen the position on international area. Taking into account institutional changes in the EU, it is necessary to cooperate more intensely in order to coordinate the position on topical issues on the EU agenda. One of the issues is drafting the new EU Finance Perspective for 2014-2020. Another aspect is the representation in the European Foreign service. Up to now the Baltic States have not been sufficiently represented in the EU institutions, and therefore, geographical and regional balance, and an adequate representation of both old and new member states has to be implemented through joint efforts. It would be beneficial in 2010 to create the Baltic task force in order to analyze possibilities for efficient use of financial and personnel resources in each representation office, and to analyze possibilities to join efforts in certain areas.

The Baltic States have established close relations with the Nordic countries by working together

on various Baltic Sea regional platforms, e.g. the Baltic Sea Council and the Northern Dimension. The cooperation capacity is not full among the Baltic States and the Nordic countries. In 2010 Latvia will also fulfil the coordinator task for Baltic – Nordic Foreign Ministers (NB-8), and thus will urge in-depth discussion on the Baltic and Nordic cooperation perspective in international forums.

Strong impulse and great opportunity for the cooperation of Baltic region countries is provided by the EU Baltic Sea Strategy, which can solve a part of common problems for the Baltic Sea region and ensure energy independence, better ecology of the Baltic Sea and development of cross-border infrastructure.

Baltic countries are also actively cooperating with other regions, for example, with the Visegrad countries. At the same time regular consultation among the Baltic States and the Benelux countries is an excellent example how small European countries can mutually support each other and strengthen their role in Europe. There is a need to develop relations towards East. At the same time it would be beneficial to look at other regions as well, which acquire a growing significance in international politics, for example, the Gulf Cooperation Countries.

This year the Baltic countries celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the Baltic Way. The live human chain was an excellent example of unity of the Baltic States.

H.E. Mr. Urmas Paet, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, emphasized that the difficult economic policy decisions made this year in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have not changed common foreign policy goals and their implementation. It has been agreed with Latvia to open a joint embassy in Cairo, Egypt, and to continue compiling the Estonia-Latvia cooperation report. Estonia also signed agreements with Latvia and Lithuania for representing each other for the issuing of visas in third countries. The countries have also participated in creating the new NATO Strategic Concept. Within the context of the EU the Baltic countries are helping to shape the Baltic Sea Strategy, which is a strategy with good theoretical framework that needs to be filled with content.

One of the biggest challenges in cooperation next year will be fulfilling international goals despite economic difficulties. Regardless of economic difficulties, the project of the three nations' armies to create a joint battalion is in the final phase. This allows to put Baltbat at the disposal of the NATO Rapid Response Force in the first half of 2010. Although NATO air policing mission in the Baltic States has been extended to 2014, it is necessary to continue finding permanent solutions. One of the biggest challenges in defence area is shaping the new NATO Strategic Concept.

It is also important to continue efforts in regard to jointly set climate goals and signing the Copenhagen Climate Agreement and preserving the Baltic Sea. The burden of the Baltic Sea has reached the limit, and every careless step could lead to irreparable damage. Further

implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan in the framework of the Baltic Sea Strategy as well as the forthcoming Baltic Sea Summit in Helsinki, are necessary steps. Meeting the climate goals greatly depends on the ability to develop economical and sustainable energy production. In Estonia the main focus is on development of bio and wind energy. And yet great effort to that would be the initiation of the new Lithuanian nuclear power plant. For the last few years the Baltic countries have jointly worked in establishing an open Baltic energy market. In order to improve energy supply it is necessary to develop new energy links with other regions as well.

H.E. Mr. Urmas Paet recalled the Baltic Way and the celebration events that took place after 20 years in the Baltic States. The unity and aspiring common goals are especially important during difficult times, and that must be continued the coming year.

Discussion

Mr. Bronius Pauža, Chairman of the BA Economic Affairs, Communications and Informatics Committee, asked in regard to the Baltic Sea Strategy, whether we could sit together and agree upon better economic cooperation by using sea shelf of the Baltic Sea without violating environmental requirements. **H. E. Mr. Vygaudas Ušackas**, Chairman of the Cooperation Council of the Baltic Council of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, answered that the Baltic Sea Strategy is not limited to sea shelf and natural resources only. It encourages the European Commission and all the states surrounding the Baltic Sea to jointly coordinate projects that would contribute to increased competitiveness of the region, starting from agriculture to energy, information technologies and biotechnologies etc. Speaking about possible resources like in the continental shelf and their use, there is an agreement between Lithuania and Latvia, and hopefully the Latvian Parliament will ratify the agreement. There have been expert meetings in this regard, where it has been possible to learn from Norway's experience. **H.E. Mr. Māris Riekstiņš**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, agreed with Lithuanian Foreign Minister regarding the Baltic Sea Strategy, which applies to not only the Baltic States, but all the EU member states of the region covering a wide spectrum of issues. If the question's underlying idea is the unsolved border issue between Latvia and Lithuania in the sea, then the Lithuanian Foreign Minister clearly outlined the current situation. This year there have been expert consultations between Latvia and Lithuania, by inviting international law experts and people dealing with energy issues. The Nordic partners have also shared their views. Currently we are exploring the experience of other countries from the region in order to apply this experience when dealing with the issue related to Latvia and Lithuania.

Dr. Ramunas Kondratas, Board of the Joint Baltic American National Committee, asked whether there have been any discussions or considerations regarding a common green strategy for the Baltic States to deal with many economic and ecological problems. Maybe Baltic and Nordic region could be the first in the world making transition away from fossil fuels. **H. E. Mr. Vygaudas Ušackas**, Chairman of the Cooperation Council of the Baltic Council of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, noted that in the area of green energy, there is a close work on trilateral basis and in regional context. There is some progress made with respect to advancing energy related projects – the common electricity market, the NordBalt cable, joint effort of the three Baltic countries and Poland to build new nuclear power plant in Lithuania. A lot need to be learnt from Denmark and Sweden, especially on how to make the best of renewable energy. At the same time a good lesson need to be learnt from the past so that such projects as Nordstream would not happen in the future. It is necessary to work together with all actors and stakeholders of the Baltic Sea to ensure that future related energy projects are uniting the countries around the Baltic Sea. **H.E. Mr. Māris Riekstiņš**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, added that since regaining the independence in 1991 in the area of environmental standards the three Baltic States have made a great progress. Each nation is playing active part in joint efforts of the EU in regard to renewable energy. Latvia is the second regarding the share of renewable energy in the final consumption. There is a commitment made by the EU, even before the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference, about the programme 2020 to increase the share of renewable energy for all EU member states by 2020. And the Baltic countries are committed to make additional efforts in the direction, e.g. increasing capabilities in using biomass. Environmental challenges can be addressed only by working together. It is great that Belarus was invited to be observer in the Baltic Sea States Council. This might help us to work with Belarusian authorities on issues linked to environmental situation in the region.

Mr. Vents Armands Krauklis, Vice Chairman of BA Economic Affairs, Communications and Informatics Committee, noted that in regard to solving economic problems one of the solutions is a more active and rapid use of EU funds. The obstacle is that by decreasing the budget income, it is very hard to ensure the national co-funding for the EU funds. The Baltic countries on the European level are individually discussing the minimization or postponing of the co-funding, but could not this issue be once again addressed on the most-top political level? **Mrs. Silva Bendrāte**, Vice Chair of the BA Social Affairs Committee, noted that the Baltic Council of Ministers has not provided answers regarding social issues. Answers provided by Estonia have not been satisfactory. Noting that answers can be found on the internet is an incorrect attitude towards the members of the Baltic Assembly. No answer to a letter which was sent a month ago to the ministers regarding establishment of joint health care system in the Baltic

States has been received. How can we work efficiently and with more results if there is such an attitude of executive power towards the Baltic Assembly, namely the Social Affairs Committee. What should we do in order to make faster the process of receiving answers to our questions?

H. E. Mr. Vygaudas Ušackas, Chairman of the Cooperation Council of the Baltic Council of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, noted that Foreign Ministers of Estonia and Latvia might be able to answer the question about answers to the letter. Regarding the question about co-financing this issue is raised on the level of the European Commission. **H.E. Mr. Māris Riekstiņš**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, answered that the subject about co-funding of EU funds was actively discussed at the European Council meeting, during which the countries that had been severely hit by the economic crisis proposed that co-funding is not required in 2009 and 2010. The European Commission was supportive, but the countries that are net payers in the EU did not support the idea. The current institutional changes in the European Commission are not the right time to push forward this policy, but when it is over, the subject will be put on the agenda again. Regarding the question about social issues it mainly relates to the work organisation. It is hard to comment on the answers provided, but it can be assured that during the next year when Latvia holds the presidency, questions posed by the members of the Baltic Assembly will be regarded with full responsibility, and the answers provided will be comprehensive and over-reaching. **Mrs. Silva Bendrāte**, Vice Chair of the BA Social Affairs Committee, noted that she is not satisfied with the provided answers. The Baltic Council of Ministers, which was established later than the Baltic Assembly with the aim to establish more closer cooperation, and to achieve results, should be competent enough to respond to all cooperation issues, including the social sphere. On behalf of the Social Affairs Committee she urged the Baltic Council of Ministers to be able to focus on social area as well. **H.E. Mr. Urmas Paet**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, noted that regarding the co-financing, the use of European structural funds are very important means to enliven economies, and these resources must be used to maximum extent. Considering the budget cuts by the Estonian Parliament, one of the principles has been that the share of the co-financing is not cut. The situation when co-financing is abolished is not realistic. Postponing of the share of the co-financing puts greater burden on the future, and that is not a sustainable and viable decision. Regarding the social issues, they are important to all ministers and the Estonian government. It is not right to say that Estonian government did not respond accordingly. Internet resources are the source for additional information. Health care and social sphere are the sectors where Baltic countries have to cooperate in. H.E. Mr. Urmas Paet referred to the restrictions in the Latvian legislation (medicinal act), which does not facilitate cooperation between the Baltic States.

At the end of the 15th Baltic Council **the Joint Statement** was signed by the President of the Baltic Assembly Dr. Mantas Adomenas and Chairman of the Cooperation Council of the Baltic Council of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania H. E. Mr. Vygaudas Ušackas (see annex no.1).

First panel discussion

“Agenda, priorities and the way ahead: Baltic cooperation institutions by 2020. *Added value of Baltic cooperation: agenda, priorities and the way ahead*”

Dr. Mantas Adomėnas, President of the Baltic Assembly, noted that political and economic agendas of the countries are becoming tenser day by day. This time is difficult for individuals, countries, regions and the whole world. Today’s crisis clearly shows that an individual country is not able to solve problems by itself. The most topical issue now is to decide what we can do together in order to step out of the deep economic and social downturn while re-orienting economics and promoting the competitiveness of the countries. The current economic crisis is an opportunity and challenge for politicians to set the development of their countries on the path of sustainability. Currently each country is facing the need to define priorities and to organise its work, namely, to determine what must be done in order to develop the best format for implementing decisions on a cost-effective basis.

On the agenda of the 28th Session of the Baltic Assembly, beside the work on social, economic, education, security and other issues, the issue of priorities, agenda and format of the Baltic parliamentary cooperation has also been included. Today’s discussions have been organised in two parts, during which the colleagues from the Foreign Affairs Committees of the Baltic parliaments will give their vision on the institutional frame of the Baltic parliamentary cooperation. It is the time to re-evaluate the future of Baltic regional cooperation and the aims of the Baltic Assembly, as well as to define ways on how to ensure stability in the region, and what is the strategic focus of the Baltic cooperation.

Mr. Audronis Ažubalis, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Seimas, noted that the Committees of the Baltic parliaments have been cooperating for a long time. The first meeting was held in 1997 in Saaremaa. At that time the Joint Statement of the three committees was drafted concerning security issues and common foreign policy, the objectives of which have been achieved. Today an important issue was raised – is the cooperation of the Baltic States so vital, can we use the term Baltic States, or should the term Baltic countries be better used? The Baltic Assembly and the Baltic cooperation over 20 years have gained an international brand. Concerning the practical cooperation there was a time when the Council of the Baltic States, formed by the Speakers of parliaments, existed. Statements of that time were largely important to the unity of the three Baltic States, and they had a great role in international arena.

Speaking about present situation and attempts to solve problems together, for example, the Nordstream project, in 2007 there was a common understanding which lead to the common statement with the three Baltic States, the Nordic countries (except Denmark), and Poland, calling for independent expertise in possible implementation of the Nordstream project. The

entire issue was developed in different ways, signatures were collected, and the statement was forwarded to the European Parliament, which followed by the Resolution of the European Parliament in 2008. After debates in different committees the resolution saw the light, but since the European Parliament has limited power, the European Commission took little attention to the Resolution. The Lisbon Strategy will soon be implemented, and the Lithuanian side has proposed the Statement of all three Baltic States to the Parliament of the EU, reminding the existence of the Resolution of 2008. No better time can be found for expressing our position now. Unfortunately the draft statement will not be signed by the speakers of the Baltic Parliaments today. Therefore the question arises: do we really want to achieve a common result? Our cooperation has not only positive aspects but also certain differences of opinion.

The Baltic States managed to be included into the NATO security organisation, and now it is necessary to work together towards the establishment of the new NATO Strategic Concept, so that the NATO does not become a political club. It is need to establish a common position on nuclear weapons of the USA, open door policy of NATO, anti-missile defence of the USA in order to defend the issues that are important to our countries.

Another great challenge is the building of a new nuclear power plant. The work on the project is being carried out despite certain speculations in the media. Lithuanian government is determined to sign agreement with strategical investor next year.

Regarding the reform of the Baltic Assembly, the Committee has drafted certain recommendations that were adopted. Despite any reforms, the Baltic Assembly has a unique work of art of the three nations. Mr. Audronis Ažubalis wished to achieve an organisation with common goals.

Mr. Sven Mikser, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Riigikogu, noted that a common identity is an imaginary or invented set of shared memories. All our nations have shared memories, which are more often imaginative. This common identity and goals should not be lost. The Baltic Assembly and its joint committee meetings is the only format for this. When looking into future, there are three options: 1) to be content with the existing format; 2) to carry on as used to and call it a reform; and 3) to implement the reform. The Foreign Affairs Committee has proposed to a rather radical reform of the Baltic Assembly, and to shift its focus to cooperation between the Standing Committees in the Parliaments. That would allow making the best use of financial and human resources as the Standing Committees have the expertise and highly qualified advisors. The Presidium would set the agenda for every year and as often as required regarding which committees, when and about what topics should meet. There are many issues of high relevance that are common and have a great potential: energy supply, nuclear energy, green energy, interconnections, gas supply, the Nordstream project, environmental concerns in the Baltic Sea, economy, defence and security, perceived solidarity. It is essential to

make the best use of human and financial resources, especially at the times when financial resources and budgets are being cut.

Dr. Jānis Eglītis, Deputy Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Saeima, drew attention to various current challenges in the world. The situation is extraordinary and solutions might be rapid and unexpected. Values, strategic goals are very clear and undisputable. Concerning efficiency and effectiveness, the business as usual will not be possible anymore. Some topics that were discussed three years ago are still being discussed. Concerning the integration of the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council, this issue has been discussed already in 2006. Dr. Eglītis suggested the Baltic Assembly to move its official decision or proposal to the Nordic Council about the official merging of both bodies. Secretary General of the Nordic Council recently has approved the discussions on this topic, and acknowledged the necessity for common work. There are plans regarding military and defence cooperation in NB-8 format. It would be logic to join efforts on the parliamentary level as well. The issues concerning political representation and the use of national language in the Baltic Assembly, are undisputable. Regarding the Estonian proposal regarding cooperation between the Standing Committees of the Parliament, this format would be a good format for the Baltic Assembly.

The Baltic Assembly will exist in one or another format, but an opposite situation is with economical cooperation, for example, numerous deliberations on energy market liberalisation and the Nordstream project. There is an evident lack of commitment to do homework – the market liberalisation in all three Baltic countries.

Speaking about the connection of the Baltic countries with the USA, the USA is one of the key factors of the Baltic independence and an essential factor for the European security. It is obvious that people and the world changes. The generation of emigrants from the Baltic countries that did enormous political lobbying is passing away and so are the American politicians with whom they had this dialogue. New economic forces appear, and superpowers more efficiently interact with appropriate powers. We cannot afford emptiness in this lobbying process in the USA. Dr. Eglītis urged to consider coordinated activities in this sector.

Dr. Mantas Adomėnas, President of the Baltic Assembly, noted that in today's discussion on cooperation of the Baltic States and the future of the organisation, there are many diverging opinions, and also the understanding that this cooperation is necessary. In 2004 it seemed that competitiveness aspects have overshadowed the cooperation, but the current crisis has showed that coordination of position and search for common decisions and solutions is important. The activity of the Baltic Assembly is complicated, its nature is at least dual. It is a format for coordinating positions, look for new strategic directions, take joint decisions and present a joint

position abroad. It is important to cooperate with other foreign partners, e.g. the GUAM PA, the Benelux Inter-parliamentary Consultative Council, and the Nordic Council, as well as to coordinate position in voting in international organisations. The Baltic Assembly also works as a tool for social cohesion. The Baltic Assembly Prize Award is the aspect of unity and identity of the Baltic States. The Baltic Assembly is also the club for meeting members of parliaments who also play basketball.

Unfortunately these three levels are not equally effective. It should not only be a club or place for basketball plays. The Baltic Assembly does not define agenda anymore. The coordination of positions has also ceased to some extent. As a successful example of cooperation the integration of social and regional policy could be named. It becomes a powerful tool in implementing joint division in foreign policy in the context of Nordic countries, Benelux Parliament or the Southern Caucuses through the GUAM PA. However this area lacks the European dimension, when being a format for coordinating joint actions in the EU institutions. This could be an explicit format for that, the need for which is disclosed by the meetings of different standing committees of the three Baltic States where positions are being coordinated, but this is held in parallel to the Baltic Assembly on the level of the three Baltic States. These processes should be included into the Baltic Assembly. Dr. Mantas Adomėnas supported to make closer contacts between the Standing Committees. The Presidium of the Baltic Assembly has approached Chairmen of the Standing Committees of Parliaments, inviting different standing committees to meet at least once a year on certain common issues. This could be an experimental format that could show how effective it is. Crisis is a possibility to consider and prepare for the time where new impetus for cooperation and integration can be given.

Mrs. Ērika Zommere, Vice President of the Baltic Assembly, Chair of the BA Latvian delegation, noted that this year has not been an easy one. A deep economic crisis has hit the Baltic States causing a series of problems that directly influence the future activities of the Baltic Assembly. The discussion on long-term agenda, priorities and format of the Baltic cooperation institutions is a hard one as it involves both structural and conceptual aspects. During the 20 years of its existence, the Baltic Assembly has undergone several complicated transformations. The Latvian delegation does not object to reforms, it has even suggested and supported the initial way of reforming the Baltic Assembly. The Latvian delegation stands for high-quality, goal-oriented and pragmatic cooperation among the parliaments of the Baltic States. The worrying aspect is that implementation of reform puts aside the most essential aspect –the cooperation itself. Resources and time is being wasted in meaningless debates on how many members should compose a delegation, how many committees there should be. Instead it would be essential to discuss how the executive powers avoid implementation of shared projects, or it

would be needed to actively involve in the EU Baltic Sea Strategy, which could open up new opportunities and prospects in the future.

Mrs. Ērika Zommere drew attention to the factors that are vitally important for parliamentary cooperation. The first factor is the national aspect. Russia and Belarus are our neighbours, and they have a different understanding of democracy. Baltic countries must have a united opinion to ensure that the desire of their powerful neighbours to undermine the Baltic countries remains only as a desire, not a real action. There is an obligation towards the GUAM countries. The Baltic countries must assist them on their way to join the family of democratic countries. The second factor is an institutional factor. Membership in the European and transatlantic families serves as a safety net, but neither the EU nor NATO will deal with Baltic problems in the social sphere and health care, crime-related or environmental problems, etc. The Baltic Sea Strategy provides the framework for policy implementation, but the measures necessary for executing the Strategy remain in the hands of the EU member states. The third factor is a sectoral factor. Energy, climate, social care, economy, safety, the Schengen area – these are just few of the spheres where solutions on the Baltic level and then on the global scene have to be found. These issues have to be addressed together, because as a trio Baltic countries are more powerful, influential and visible.

There are the following proposals made by the Latvian delegation regarding the long-term development of the Baltic Assembly. Firstly, deliberating about the necessity and meaning of the Baltic cooperation must be stopped. Secondly, cooperation between the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers must be strengthened. Thirdly, in cooperation with the Foreign Affairs Committees and Speakers of the national parliaments, it must be defined in what way the Assembly can be used for realising the common interests. Fourthly, structural reforms of the Baltic Assembly must be implemented only after setting clear future goals for the organisation.

The Latvian delegation has a clear proposal regarding the common future goal which is reflected in one of next year's priorities – closer integration of the Baltic States and Nordic countries. The more integrated the Baltic States are among themselves (harmonised health care, education, taxation systems, etc.) the more attractive cooperation models they are to their Scandinavian colleagues. The Latvian delegation regards that the most important goal is to form a secure and strong region, which would lead to closer Baltic integration and closer cooperation with the Nordic countries, as well as to establish cooperation between the legislative and executive power that is just as effective as cooperation between the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Mr. Trivimi Velliste, Vice President of the Baltic Assembly, Chairman of the BA Estonian delegation, noted that the topic of today's discussion can be included into two separate issues: 1)

what are the preferences on the road to future until 2020; and 2) what kind of cooperation forms are need for that. To answer the question concerning future, it is good to evaluate what has been achieved in 20 years. The Baltic Assembly has issued two books – one for the 10th Anniversary of the Baltic Assembly in 2001, which documents a comprehensive overview of all the documents adopted in 10 years. The second album is similar, with many photographs. Looking through both volumes an important issue can be noticed. It is the aspiration to survive. Classical expression says that countries do not have friends, they have interests. What are our common interests today?

When talking about assessing threat to our countries, there is a big difference in seeing the near and far future. Forecasts for near future are easy to make, but forecasts for longer time are difficult to make. When building something jointly, it is essential to make the “construction” strong. If it is decided to build the states together, there must be a feeling of unanimous being. This kind of feeling was present when the Baltic Way was commemorated.

Mr. Trivimi Velliste suggested mapping all the institutions which have been closely cooperating all these years. For example, the Estonian National Library has close relations with Latvian and Lithuanian national libraries. Such kind of cooperation in civic society is very important. It would also be needed to think about common tourism. The Baltic Assembly has an obligation to work outwardly.

Mr. Kent Olsson, Vice President of the Nordic Council, on behalf of the Nordic Council, expressed his gratitude to be invited to the Session of the Baltic Assembly. He noted that there had been a number of opportunities to meet over a year: BSPC conference in Nyborg, the seminar on Baltic future in Vilnius, the Nordic Council Session in Stockholm. Today’s topic on the future for 2020 is highly topical. Looking 20 years back few had expected the fall of the Berlin Wall, or peaceful manifestations through the Baltic countries on 23 August 1989. The crisis gives impetus for good cooperation with the neighbouring countries. Now it is possible to take the most important decisions. Cooperation between the Nordic Council and the Baltic Assembly is getting more pragmatic and result-oriented. There have been three arching priorities for Nordic-Baltic cooperation in 2009: the EU Baltic Sea Strategy and the Northern Dimension; promoting relations with the EU’s new neighbours; and climate change and its consequences. Today it was positive to hear from the three Foreign Ministers that they find this cooperation useful. It is important to widen the Nordic-Baltic cooperation and to open it for other partners. Both organisations have to develop democratic processes and liberal societies also outside the Baltic–Nordic region. A positive tendency is to organise joint seminars with the participation of Belarusian representatives both from position and opposition parties. It is expected to organise roundtable seminar in Minsk in the spring of 2010, and a seminar for young politicians in Vilnius. Already the first session in 2007 on the role of politicians in changing societies in

Vilnius was an excellent format for discussions among parliamentarians and experts from the Nordic and Baltic countries, Belarus position and opposition leaders. Since then there have been good seminars in 2008 and 2009. Another important challenge is the cooperation with the Russian Federation. This triangle cooperation takes place through joint activities in the BSPC. It is necessary to focus more on implementation of the EU Northern Dimension policy. Mr. Olsson noted that there will be several events to meet: the Annual Summit of the Nordic Council and the Baltic Assembly in February in Vilnius, meetings of the BSPC Working Groups. It might be decided to have fewer meetings, but with greater priority. It is important to continue cooperating, but priority must be given to the themes where the mutual benefits for our countries and citizens are the greatest.

Mr. Marcel Oberweis, representing the President of the Benelux Parliament, on behalf of the Benelux Delegation expressed gratitude for the invitation to the 28th Session of the Baltic Assembly and extended kind regards on behalf of Bart Tommelein, the present President of the Benelux Parliament. The question of this panel discussion is not simple as it requires to deal with a well-interconnected question. There are several main axes, which should be taken into account: the foreign affairs, the strategy of security, the economical sight, the social dimension and the welfare of the inhabitants of this North-East region of the European Union. Regional cooperation is a tough process that begins with dealing with core items and grows slowly during many years by inviting various actors - the governmental and non- governmental partners. Building networks of interdependence represents a very important tool. Different fields ranging from political to social and cultural spheres are involved in the process. The nature of cooperation must be seen as a bridge between generations. This process is the result of interactions between external and internal dynamic forces, which facilitate and stimulate the regional cooperation. In order to progress in cooperation, there need to be willingness and ability of the regional actors to identify common interests. Benelux has become a very important element of the European Union and it is well linked with major economies. Concerning security Benelux is well embedded, as it has no borders to countries with political instabilities. With the Lisbon Treaty on the way the European Union will hopefully become the major partner on the global stage.

Concerning the Baltic Sea region, the three EU member states – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are close neighbours of Russia. The Baltic Sea region is important for the European Union. The European Union is the main engine of prosperity and stable development of integration and peace. Security is indivisible and cannot be maintained in the long run without a functioning relationship with neighbouring countries.

Regional cooperation is an important instrument to facilitate further integration and is not an

alternative to it. The economic growth must recover due to the disastrous economy and financial crisis. The welded economic and political links between the three countries of the region: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will be strong elements of the successful way. These interconnected processes are mutually reinforcing, enhancing and strengthening the stability, the security and the cooperation in the Baltic region.

Mr. Marcel Oberweis was convinced that the Baltic region will continue to grow and prosper. The impressive political and economic progress of the countries of the Baltic Sea region clearly demonstrate that this region has become one of the most dynamic areas of the European Union. He assured that the Benelux Parliament will encourage and support all Baltic initiatives to reach the goals.

Second panel discussion

**“Baltic cooperation and crisis: in quest of security, sustainability and growth
*How to ensure stability in the Baltic region in long-term perspective: Baltic solutions.
Economic, social and education dimensions”***

Dr. Mantas Adomėnas, President of the Baltic Assembly, noted that the main goal of this panel discussion is to have open discussion on what has to be done to ensure development, competitiveness and welfare of the Baltic region. In which areas the Baltic partnership is needed? Which mistakes in Baltic non-cooperation in some of the fields have been made? What joint steps would be needed in social, macroeconomic, business, fiscal policies?

Dr. Mindaugas Jurkynas, Institute of International Relations and Political Science of Vilnius University, noted that he has done a research on Baltic and Nordic cooperation. There are challenges like financial crisis, migration, European neighbourhood, etc. Where do the Baltic and Nordic countries fit? It can be noted that the Baltic people usually speak about three things: Russia, energy security and the EU and transatlantic relations. What are the changes we are living through? With the fall of the Berlin Wall, Europe is preoccupied with the management of change – how to manage changes that have been occurring since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Europe is involved in the European and neighbourhood affairs, where the Baltic Sea Strategy and the Eastern partnership can be mentioned. Basic points which can be discussed within the framework of Baltic-Nordic cooperation: first, admitting that the identity of the Baltic region does not exist. None of the countries in the Baltic Sea region associate themselves as primary identity of Baltic Sea region. Second, the crisis has made a pressure on national governments, which had to re-shift their priorities. Third, the EU Eastern partnership has received 6 hundred million euros, which is a very small amount compared to the European expenditures. There are certain worries, especially from Southern European countries, for the East-North dimension, which might inhibit certain political tensions and pose some difficulties for the search of

partners. Fourth, looking at international relations, the modern and post-modern division exist. Modern principles focus on actors as sovereignty, strict borders, territoriality, whereas post-modern approach is visible a lot in the Nordic countries and European countries. There is a clash of these interests and principles in the Baltic Sea area. Fifth, the Baltic Sea Strategy does not refer to Russia, which is the main element for the Baltic Sea region to exist, since it aims at internal Baltic Sea affairs and allies with Russia. Six, there might be latent competition between the Baltic Sea Strategy and the Northern Dimension. As there is no money, these policies might reveal certain differences in principle. Seven, there are a lot of regional organisations whose agendas are overlapping.

The Baltic Assembly with all its ups and downs has showed certain resilience, socialisation of political elite, exchange of good practices, intellectually solving problems that are transferred into resolutions. Similar geopolitical locations, soviet legacies, post-communist transformation, experiences of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia comprise a good potential for continuing corporate practices and European values eastwards. As regards regional identity it is a high time to get rid of “victimization” (the unhappy Soviet past). Concerning mechanics, the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic institutions could work more hand in hand. Regular party faction and committee meetings should be held to exchange ideas and experience. Joint budget, secretariat and involvement of chairpersons in national parliaments would favour flexibility and efficiency of collaboration.

Mr. Andris Strazds, Researcher of the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga, noted that he will speak about the changed management from the process perspective. Key steps in a successful changed management process: to create a sense of urgency, gather strong team, create and communicate a desirable future vision and execute it. The Baltic States have at least twice successfully implemented those steps. The first time was when regaining independence in 1990s, the second time - when joining the EU and NATO. Now the Baltic countries have to change again, but how to do it in a successful changed management? Is there a sense of urgency? Yes. Is there a strong team? Maybe. Is there a vision? No. Contrary to late 1990s we now do not have a strong vision. A valid vision is not an idea of self-sufficient development and protectionism in the Baltic States. Euro accession is not a vision either, as it will not solve the fiscal and employment problems, nor it will bring more foreign investment. Vision for the Baltic States is that of countries with competent and efficient public sector, highly educated people, effectively enforced legislation, reliable infrastructure etc. so that the Baltic countries are viewed by investors as attractive platforms to develop, export or import products and services. That would enable the private sectors to build their own platforms, export-oriented industries and companies for which the potential pool of customers would not be limited only by 6,5 billion

people.

As regards platforms, there are numerous internet platforms such as *facebook*, *twitter*, *draugiem.lv*, however this concept can be broadened. Production companies are also a platform, where inputs are efficiently transformed into outputs in such a way that outputs are worth more the input. A hospital is a platform where patient meets a doctor; a school is a platform that brings together professor and students; a conference is a platform that brings together people who exchange their views and ideas. Basing the development on this kind of platforms, would enable to attract more customers in a private sector than just by focusing on specific industries.

How to create a general platform that would enable for the private sector to create successful platforms? First, the fiscal consolidation is important, second, even if taxes are increased, it is important not to increase the direct taxes (focus on consumption and property taxes more). It is necessary to reduce administrative burden in all the Baltic countries. Also the education sector, infrastructure must be improved. It is essential to proactively manage migration before it manages the Baltic countries.

Mr. Peep Mühls, Chairman of the Executive Board, Estonian Cooperation Assembly, informed that Estonian Cooperation Assembly is a cooperation network of non-governmental organizations interested in Estonia's long-term development. The goals are to share and coordinate the views of these organisations and on this basis to produce assessments and proposals regarding issues that are central to the future of the country. The Assembly has focused on these major issues: education, economy, labour force, public health, population and ethnic relations. There are 70 organisations participating in the activity and the Assembly has two main outputs – proposals to the government: Charter Proposals (CP) on Education (November 2008) and CP on Human Assets (June 2009). The Estonian Human Development Report is being issued each year.

What are we trying to achieve in Estonia? How do we imagine Estonia in the next decade? Have we achieved those goals we had before joining the EU and NATO? Euro is not a magic, but it could be a brush with which to paint the future of the country. To move forward it is necessary to know what is Estonia's position in the EU? Where have the Baltic States come in their development?

Mr. Peep Mühls demonstrated a presentation covering a number of sectors. In education sector, it was noted that the tertiary education is deeply feminized. There are many highly educated people in this sector, but it is not clear where the skilled workers are. Regarding press and economic freedom, Estonia is moving to the top. In comparison, Scandinavian countries are very free. Economic freedom is closely related to other freedoms and human rights. Looking at the corruption index, Estonia's situation is not too bad. A great problem for Estonia is that there are clearly separated groups in terms of assets. In terms of connectivity and development of

society it is not a positive trend.

What is the aim of public discussion? Almost 20 years have passed since regaining the independence, but there is still a paradigm of building the society and economy in the Baltic States. When looking at the satisfaction level of people, the satisfaction indicators are very low. The state and economy has been developed, but the reason why it has been done, has not been understood. The current discussions in Estonia look for a new story of Estonia in the international context and in the context of development of the state and society.

Small countries have a serious challenge of openness versus protectionism, and in connection with openness there are a lot of risks involved. Estonia's strategic problem is not the neighbourhood of Russia or national security. The problem is the decrease in population.

In order to go on and have a vision it is reasonable to formulate problems and agree on issues, and solutions will eventually come. In 2011 it will be 20 years since the independence of the Baltic countries was rebuilt. Mr. Mühl proposed to make a document of the three Baltic States, by inviting Nordic countries as partners, depicting where the three Baltic countries have come, what kind of goals have been reached, and what can be done in cooperation with the Nordic partners. The document could be presented at an international conference in 2011.

Mr. Helgi Hjörvar, President of the Nordic Council 2010, outlined the priority areas for 2010: culture and language, marine issues, crisis and cooperation with partners, security in its broader sense of the word (defence, air policing, Stoltenberg report, organised crime, trafficking, economic security etc.). Mr. Helgi Hjörvar noted that in order to tackle the current problems, it is necessary to strengthen international cooperation. History shows that in times of crisis, isolation, protectionism and nationalism may be populist, but never be solutions to the problems. It is also needed to learn the lesson from the crisis. For example, Iceland had underestimated the Nordic values, its welfare model, and now Iceland has to strengthen its cooperation with the Nordic countries. Also environmental issues will be considered as a security issue. Nordic countries, and especially Denmark, have been in the lead of environment for a long time.

The Nordic Council has followed the work of the Baltic Assembly with great admiration – for mastering the strength to achieve freedom, and since then showing that achieving the freedom was worthwhile in creating prosperous societies. The problems that are present will sooner or later be solved.

Mr. Marcel Oberweis, representing the President of the Benelux Parliament, noted that ensuring stability in the Baltic region in a long-term perspective cannot be seen without the European dimension. The 27 member states will have to create a platform which will bundle the economic, social and educational dimensions. Concerning the economic dimension, the Benelux

countries have created a free trade space. Energy supply system and communications systems have developed to a strong market. Also the Baltic States have created a free trade space, and since becoming members of the EU in 2004, the cooperation has grown fast and the cross-border affairs are expanding. From a security point of view, the Baltic States have the same problem concerning the energy supply problems. Arriving at an energy consensus means to achieve agreements of connecting the Baltic region's energy grids to the huge Europe's power energy system. In order to reduce the impact on the environment and dependency of energy supplies from abroad, it will be necessary to enhance the use of renewable energies throughout the European Union.

Concerning the social dimension, not all EU member states are engaged in considerations of social dimension at the same degree, therefore it would be needed to strengthen this European cooperation. The EU finds itself confronted with several factors. For example, the Lisbon Strategy, which calls upon economic agents to change their behaviour in ways that will only be accepted if they bring about social progress.

Concerning the educational dimension, higher educational system should play a strong role in the European educational systems. Fostering social cohesion, raising the level of knowledge, skills and competences in society, and reducing inequalities are the main items of this policy. Students should be able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background. The Bologna Process represents the major item of the European higher education system and the common commitment to make the higher education accessible to all. As the EU is lacking skilled working people it is necessary to invite youth to higher education.

The following topics may serve as guidelines for the common policy: 1) planning the future means that it is needed to act now, and it involves fulfilling the intergenerational deal; 2) when developing the policy it is needed to invite all the inhabitants to build bridges and change the mind towards sustainable development; 3) realization that the present-day challenges cannot be addressed with the tools from the past.

Mr. Ali Masimli, Member of the Azerbaijani delegation to the GUAM PA, noted that financial and economic crisis will come into history as the main event of the 21st century. Expenditure of the global economy to fight global crisis exceeds 12 billion dollars. These effects are only superficial and do not treat the disease itself, but only makes an impression that the sick patient is healthy. Economic indicators for countries will be very different in 2010. Many countries are facing with the threats of security, competitiveness and problems of living standards. Mr. Masimi noted that it would be needed to think about optimal model for cooperation between the Caspian, the Black and the Baltic Sea region. There should be an efficient use of human capital, the potential of gas and oil, integration prospects on the basis of favourable geographic

position. The first priority should be allotted to efficient use of human capital, development of innovations. The current strategies on using innovative models mean closer and more flexible cooperation between scientific institutions. It is necessary to establish a functioning mechanism according to which scholars could cooperate with businesses. The second priority would be the efficient use of oil and gas potential. The countries of the Caspian and Black sea region have abundant resources and they are located in a good geographical position. As the security issue is very important there is a need to diversify energy supply to the European Union. If *Nabucco* project is realised, it would become possible to transport gas from Azerbaijan to Germany. If the gas is transported through Bulgaria, it reaches even further markets. The energy corridor *Odesa-Brody-Plotsk-Gdansk* plays an important role. Through this corridor the Azerbaijani oil could reach Poland and Lithuania. The EU in 2012 is planning to establish the Southern corridor according to which oil from Azerbaijan and Georgia will be provided to the EU. It is necessary to become leaders in the field of innovation both in traditional and alternative energy supply.

The aspiration of the GUAM is integration in the European structures. GUAM has decided to work more intensively in establishing cooperation projects with the Czech Republic, Baltic countries and Scandinavian countries. The declaration regarding cooperation between the Baltic Assembly and the GUAM PA points to the main cooperation directions. This will help to promote democracy, social and economic development in the GUAM countries. Similar declaration could be signed with the Benelux countries and the Nordic Council as well. That would help to achieve progress in strategic partnership, thus increasing global and regional security.

Mrs. Christina Gestrin, Chair of the Standing Committee of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, on behalf of the BSPC, expressed her gratitude for being invited to the 28th Session of the Baltic Assembly. The theme of security and safety is of fundamental importance for the welfare of the citizens, democratic progress, social coherence and economic prosperity. Regarding the civil security, it has undergone a fundamental transformation over the last 10-15 years. Threats against society have moved from military to civilian spheres. They are embedded in vulnerabilities and risks that more or less covertly can eat their way into society's fabric and undermine democracy and welfare. Today's society is faced with a wide spectrum of risks and threats: natural catastrophes, environmental degradation, political, social and infrastructural vulnerabilities, poverty, welfare rifts, ideological fanaticism, organized crime, terrorism etc.

The recent financial meltdown is one pertinent example of a crisis with dire repercussions for the safety of the citizen and the security of society's central functions. Ultimately, civil security is a matter of building and securing a stable democratic and inclusive society. This requires a

comprehensive view of threats and their management. The basic tenet for such a view is the supremacy of human rights and the rule of law.

Civil security issues are high on the agenda of the BSPC. The 18th BSPC resolution urges the governments of the Baltic Sea Region and the CBSS to enhance cooperation on civil security issues, in order to foster a joint and comprehensive understanding of the threats facing the Baltic Sea region. The governments were asked to step up cooperation in order to strengthen the joint capacity to take forceful action against organized cross-border crime. Cooperation against trafficking in human beings should be intensified, with emphasis on preventive measures, protection for victims and measures against the root causes of trafficking.

The Resolution also calls for the implementation of proper legislation against trafficking in human beings, in accordance with relevant UN and Council of Europe protocols and conventions. Furthermore, countries were asked to strengthen coordination and cooperation on crisis management and civil protection against natural, technological and man-made risks and emergencies. This includes concerted action to reinforce IT security against cyber crimes, and protective measures against the disruption of critical infrastructure systems.

The BSPC has launched a political Working Group on Civil Security, especially trafficking in human beings. The group will be chaired by Line Barfod, MP from Denmark. All member parliaments and parliamentary organizations of the BSPC will be invited to join the Working Group. It has to be ensured that the work of the Working Group is synchronized with related work in other organizations, such as the CBSS, the OSCE and the Council of Europe. Other programmes and initiatives in the Baltic Sea Region, such as the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan also constitute important contributions to the enhancement of safety and security of the Region.

The key to enhanced security and safety in the region lies in deepened and widened cooperation, in which all countries of the region are involved. They should commit themselves to the implementation of jointly elaborated goals. A basic prerequisite is that parties can interact as equals, regardless of their size or weight. Mutuality is also central: cooperation should foster compromises and solutions that ensure that both the gains and disadvantages of an agreement are equitably spread among parties. A structure in which one or a few parties are systematically favored is not cooperative in a genuine sense, and will soon lose its credibility. In other words, true cooperation is characterized by give-and-take for the common good.

Parliamentary fora such as Baltic Assembly, BSPC, Nordic Council and others are important arenas for candid political debate. Mrs. Christina Gestrin reaffirmed the value of close and fruitful relations between the Baltic Assembly and the BSPC.

Discussion

Mr. Jānis Reirs, Member of the BA Presidium, Vice Chairman of the BA Latvian delegation, commented on the issue about reforms, by noting that when trying to implement reforms it is necessary to define what do we want to achieve. Politicians have a good tool – debates and discussions. It is very hard to assess efficiency. Efficiency and benefits of the Baltic Assembly depend on how topical the discussed issues are what the priorities are. There may be years where no good priorities are set, as there may be successful years, when the Assembly has managed to conclude agreement with the GUAM PA. The Baltic Assembly has extended its cooperation. It has also established cooperation with the Belarus Parliament and its opposition. With the assistance of the Nordic Council the Assembly is bringing the position and opposition together.

Mrs. Baiba Rivža, Vice Chair of the BA Education, Science and Education Committee, noted that Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia together regained their independence, jointly joined the EU and NATO. All these joint activities have led to the fulfilment of facing great challenges. It was noted that regarding joining the Euro zone, Estonia puts its goal to join the Euro zone as first, which could be motivating for Lithuania and Latvia, however would not it be beneficial to fight for joint accession to the Euro zone? **Mr. Peep Mühls**, Chairman of the Executive Board, Estonian Cooperation Assembly, answered that Estonia needs to use the crisis time to start discussions about long-term goals. It does not matter whether it joins the Euro zone sooner or later. This will be known only next year, but currently it is important to set some goals and shape the public opinion. **Mr. Trivimi Velliste**, Vice President of the Baltic Assembly, added that there is a tradition to raise questions like this in Estonia. During the process of NATO and EU accession the situation was similar. At a certain time Estonia was more prepared to join the EU than the other two Baltic States. Lithuania was more prepared to join the NATO. In the end it was a matter of political decision. It is only a prediction to say that Estonia will join the Euro zone in 2011.

Mr. Stanislovas Giedraitis, Member of the BA Economic Affairs, Communications and Informatics Committee, asked how long will it take to implement the oil delivery from Azerbaijan to Lithuania's Mažeiki oil refinery via Gdansk. **Mr. Ali Masimli**, Member of the Azerbaijani delegation to the GUAM PA, answered that implementation will depend on timeline when the communication issues are finished. Ukraine has joined Azerbaijan in addressing this issue. In the future this project should become a reality. For the *Nabucco* project there is a political decision already. Hopefully the *Nabucco* will be built and in 2013-2014 it will operate.

Mrs. Silva Bendrāte, Vice Chair of the BA Social Affairs Committee, asked the President of the Baltic Assembly whether there are any ideas on how to ensure the cooperation of the Baltic States with the executive power, i.e. the cooperation of the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers in achieving certain goals. **Dr. Mantas Adomėnas**, President of the Baltic Assembly, replied that this issue has been discussed in the BA Presidium, where it was decided to make more strict control of the work of the Baltic Council of Ministers.

Mr. Marcel Oberweis, representing the President of the Benelux parliament, drew attention to the distributed material by the Institute of Ecology of Vilnius University about the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Finland, referring to the described threats in the sea. There is an agreement to build the Nordstream pipeline. Why has the paper been distributed? **Dr. Mantas Adomėnas**, President of the Baltic Assembly, noted that he has not seen the document, but it must be the initiative of Committees of Foreign Affairs. Since there was intention to sign trilateral appeal by the Speakers of Parliament regarding Nordstream, this is a study that has been conducted by the Institute of Ecology. **Mr. Trivimi Velliste**, Vice President of the Baltic Assembly, noted that Estonian Parliament has also debated the issue of Nordstream pipeline. The Estonian Parliament is very critical on the whole project. It relies on the know-how of Estonian scientists, ecologists and non-political research institutions. The striking factor is that scientists of different countries are of different opinion of the potential impact of the pipeline. Many leading Estonian scientists are very critical of the pipeline at the same time many scientists from Nordic countries have different opinion. **Dr. Mantas Adomėnas** added that this issue will be on the agenda of discussions for the BA Environment Protection and Energy Committee in 2010.

At the end of the panel discussions the **Joint Statement of the GUAM PA and the Baltic Assembly** was signed by the President of the Baltic Assembly Dr. Mantas Adomėnas and Chairman of the GUAM PA Mr. Vano Khukhunaishvili (see annex no. 2).

**Continuation of the 27th Session of the Baltic Assembly
Report of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly**

Dr. Mantas Adomėnas, President of the Baltic Assembly, noted that the year 2009 for the presidency of Lithuania in the Baltic Assembly was exceptional. This year marked the 20th anniversary of a unique peaceful demonstration – the Baltic Way. With a common song and unity the unbending will for freedom, self-determination and democracy, thus confirming the moral strength, human and democratic potential was showed. The importance of the Baltic Way was so substantial that UNESCO added it to the Memory of the World Register. The Baltic Assembly celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the Baltic Way by enlivening this chain from Tallinn to Vilnius again, by crossing the countries with the fire of the Baltic unity on the 22nd and 23rd of August.

Consequences of the global economic crisis are felt by every state in economical and social dimensions. The Baltic countries are spiralling deeper and deeper into economic chaos - high rate of unemployment, decrease of GDP, lack of finances, heavy pressure of social budgets., which forces to reconsider internal policies. Countries need to set priorities and organise their work, and to determine what must be done to develop the best format for implementing decisions on a cost-effective basis.

Priorities of the Baltic Assembly in 2009 were: 1) stabilisation of economies of the Baltic States, provision of sustainable growth, promoting competitiveness and encouraging progress factors, including information society, science development and new ideas; 2) integrated and efficient energy, Baltic Sea environment and follow up of the status of chemical weapons dumped in it, sustainable transport; 3) promoting active regional cooperation, sharing positive experience, enhancing cultural relations in the region.

During the Session chairmen of the committees will present the activity report of 2009. This year the committees of the Baltic Assembly have covered the most challenging fields: common solutions to unemployment in the region, common approach to education, science and research, development of common Baltic energy market, development of common health care system.

Regarding the work of the Presidium, one of the main tasks is to represent the Baltic Assembly at different international foras, by informing on the activities and goals, and to supervise the work of the Baltic Assembly in-between the Sessions. The Presidium has paid particular attention to security challenges. The fall of the Berlin Wall two decades ago brought about a wave of optimism regarding rumours about the final death of the Cold War. It was assumed that the 21st Century would have to focus on new threats, but a rise of new dangers does not necessarily mean that old dangers must vanish. Extent of risks is not diminishing, and there is a dilemma that with wider risks countries have lower possibilities to overcome the crisis.

The Presidium of the Baltic Assembly has organised two roundtable discussions on new security agenda with participation of Nordic, Benelux and GUAM colleagues, researchers and scientists and governmental experts. After these discussions many important conclusions were made. First, the Baltic States must involve in more active discussions on new security concepts which have been discussed by the NATO and the EU. It is necessary to formulate the common position of the Baltic State. Second, enlargement euphoria in the Baltic States has been supplanted by the apprehension that security challenges and threats have not disappeared, that there is a need to articulate new foreign and security objectives. Third, the Baltic States must promote stability and security in the Caucasus region. The Baltic Assembly is carefully following the security and stability of Georgia and Azerbaijan. It is necessary to take decisions based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is important to strengthen the EU mission in Georgia, and address the issue of refugees and compensations.

As regards cooperation with the Nordic Council, this organisation remains the principal partner of the Baltic Assembly. Building regional cooperation networks and partnerships in social, educational, economic, cultural and other areas is an example of Nordic wisdom which the Baltics should follow. During the serious economic recession it is necessary to put strong emphasis on cooperation that will ensure sustainable development and competitiveness of the Baltic–Nordic region.

The Baltic Assembly has focused its cooperation on three main goals: 1) implementation of the EU Baltic Sea Strategy. The Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council together with their governmental partners should take concrete joint steps to exert considerable influence in implementing the strategy; 2) building networks with EU's new neighbours is another top priority for cooperation between both organisations. The Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council aim to continue developing the contacts with political establishment and opposition in Belarus. The same aim applies to Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan; 3) The Baltic Assembly has agreed to cooperate in elaborating common policies and measures to mitigate climate change; 4) both organisations are working hand in hand to respond to the consequences of the global economic and financial crisis, which involves coordinating positions regarding management of unemployment, timely actions and social support, joint strategies on provision of sustainable growth and promotion of competitiveness.

With regard to cooperation with the Benelux Parliament, the Benelux is a good example of a well-organised group of small countries within the EU, having considerable historic background of regional cooperation. On 13 March 2009 in Brussels the “Decision on joint cooperation priorities between the Baltic Assembly and the Benelux Parliament” was signed. This Baltic – Benelux parliamentary cooperation will be focused on sustainable development, formation of

democratic relations with the EU neighbours and fight against new threats to international security.

Third dimension of the Baltic Assembly's international cooperation is cooperation with the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly. The Baltic Assembly has set development and strengthening of cooperation with the GUAM PA as high political priority on the agenda. Dr. Mantas Adomėnas assured that GUAM countries can rely on support of the Baltic States and the support of the Baltic Assembly. The "Declaration on Cooperation between the Baltic Assembly and the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly" was signed on 19 June 2009 in Vilnius. Jointly it has been stated that the overall aim of parliamentary cooperation between both organisations is to promote democratic, socio-economic and cultural development of the Baltic and GUAM countries, contribute to resolution of the protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and to provide political support for regional cooperation from a wider European perspective. This cooperation must promote solution of problems, resolution of conflicts, presence of European and transatlantic organisations in GUAM. The BA Presidium has also participated in the 4th Session of the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly in Tbilisi this year.

With regard to reforms of the Baltic Assembly, the operational dynamics of the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers can be described as fluctuating and heterogeneous. It was a consequence of Estonia's, Latvia's and Lithuania's developing domestic and foreign policy and needs, international politics and external threats, national interests and goals as well as the perception of the three Baltic States as a unified region. This mutual cooperation can be characterised as interplay between cooperation and competition.

Since 1991 there have been several economic conflicts among the Baltic States, but it is clearly understood that regional cooperation, coordination of activities and policies, elaborating joint strategies and visions of development of the region in different areas have more advantages and benefits. The cooperation process must be faster, more efficient and more flexible. It is necessary to follow the decision-making process of the EU, and if possible, to react jointly.

Dr. Mantas Adomėnas introduced with the main conclusions: 1) economic and financial crisis has clearly shown that there is a need for more coordinated Baltic strategies and policies in social, health, education, research, security, foreign, economic and financial fields; 2) Baltic parliamentary cooperation and the work of the Baltic Assembly is needed; discussions on the development of the Baltic Assembly work are difficult but it is necessary to agree on a model of parliamentary cooperation which could serve as efficient and powerful instrument in achieving the goals of cooperation; and 3) international cooperation with international partners will be increased. Dr. Mantas Adomėnas noted that it was a pleasure to be the President of the Baltic Assembly in 2009.

Reports of the BA Committees on the activities in 2009 and priorities for 2010 and introduction to the draft documents

Mr. Gediminas Navaitis, Chairman of the Social Affairs Committee, noted that social and demographic preconditions for the development of flexible labour market in the Baltic countries under conditions of economic crisis, social security, management of the unemployment situation, development of joint health care system in the Baltic States were the main issues on the agenda of the Baltic Assembly Social Affairs Committee.

As a result of the financial and economic crisis the Baltic States are facing with different problems such as the lack of financial resources, which results in termination of employment. Further possibilities in finding new job places are encumbered by insufficient or inappropriate skills. More and more people who have lost their jobs seek for job opportunities abroad. Brain-drain or labour migration is closely related to education. Many of the professions are not needed in today's labour market.

A grave problem is the lack of entrepreneurship and understanding how the business world is working. Therefore the dialogue and understanding between enterprises and universities is needed. Special attention should be paid to entrepreneurial studies in higher education, especially within the non-business studies with the aim to increase their competitiveness in the labour market. In this respect different ministries should cooperate and find a common aim on the sectors which need to be developed and what professions need to be fostered.

As a result of discussions the Committee has come to the conclusion that no social programme will be able to solve these problems alone, because all the spheres are very much interlinked. Four main areas in which the political measures need to be properly addressed on the national and regional level can be specified: firstly, the social area, secondly, the area of education and knowledge, thirdly, the area of regional development; and the area of business development. The Committee has addressed national governments with concrete recommendations for urgent activities in all the three Baltic countries. In the area of social affairs the Committee has recommended decreasing the unemployment level by target-oriented use of the EU funds; allocating resources for training and re-training of the unemployed; improving cooperation between public institutions and entrepreneurs; extending the period for receiving the unemployment benefit. In the area of education and knowledge: aligning education programmes with the market needs; initiating significant reforms in vocational education in order to make the system of vocational education responsive to the needs of labour market. In the area of regional development: focusing on regional development strategy and creating targeted social protection thus minimizing the social risks. In the area of business development: forming Baltic business incubators; strengthening competitiveness in the Baltic countries by using common knowledge

resources, innovations and technological excellence; facilitating equal transfer of knowledge and partnership networks, i.e. cooperating between universities and enterprises; developing harmonised business by harmonizing fiscal, legislative and administrative norms in the Baltic countries.

The committee has submitted the “Resolution on Ensuring Sustainable Economic and Social Development in the Baltic States” which calls on the national parliaments and governments of the Baltic States and the Baltic Council of Ministers concrete recommendations concerning the mentioned issues. The Resolution also underlines the main points that have been discussed in the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference Working Group on Labour Market and Social Welfare.

The committee has started to deal with the development of joint Baltic health care system that will be continued also next year. It is necessary to concentrate on four main areas: 1) common transplant centres for the Baltic States; 2) joint medical centres which require significant investment in terms of finances, technology, and professionalism; 3) common system for procurement of medications and medical equipment; 4) increased coordination and functioning of first aid services in border towns.

The main priorities of the Committee next year will be social security and challenges to the social systems of the Baltic States and development of joint Baltic health care systems.

Resolution on Ensuring Sustainable Economic and Social Development in the Baltic States was unanimously adopted by the national delegations of the Baltic Assembly.

Mr. Egidijus Klumbys, Member of the Economic Affairs, Communications and Informatics Committee, informed about the Committee’s main priorities: focus on joint Baltic energy market and joint Baltic approach towards ensuring reliable energy supply to the Baltic countries. The Committee has not gathered for its own meeting this year, but has discussed energy issues jointly with the BA Environmental Protection and Energy Committee.

Mr. Egidijus Klumbys emphasized that it is particularly essential to ensure cooperation, in some ways also integration, in the areas that can promote competitiveness and ensure safe and secure environment in the region. It should be the cooperation in the area of transport, economy, energy, education, research and other spheres. As the resources of Baltic countries are limited consolidation of resources, common partnerships, joint approaches in absorbing the EU structural funds, joint infrastructure projects, cooperation instead of competition for foreign investments would increase development of the countries and ensure welfare of the citizens. There should be cooperation between the Baltic States in seeking the market opportunities, especially for innovative services. Joint efforts to improve competitiveness by using common knowledge resources, innovations and technological excellence will facilitate development not

only of each country but of the whole region. The Committee has to work jointly, it has to listen to advice of its Nordic and Benelux friends, it has to organise joint brainstorming with researchers on new economic potentials, economic stabilisation and renewing competitiveness of the Baltic region. Parliamentarians have to think in long-term categories by finding obstacles in legislation, by gathering international experience in problem solving and by elaborating sustainable development of our countries in social, economic, education, infrastructure and other fields.

Therefore the Committee has drafted the “Recommendation on Joint Measures in Developing a Common Baltic Business Environment” by calling the governments to take the following steps: 1) develop joint strategies for sustainable development of the Baltic States in energy, communication and technologies, medicine, creative industries, transport and logistics, pharmacology and other fields which would ensure increase of competitiveness of the Baltic States; 2) form joint Baltic business incubators; 3) develop harmonised business in the Baltic States by harmonising fiscal, legislative and administrative norms in the Baltic States and by reassessing the existing regulatory acts and developing new regulatory acts, and by diminishing obstacles for innovative entrepreneurship.

Next year the Committee will focus on the issues of economic stabilisation and renewal of competitiveness of the Baltic region by analysing cooperation of the Baltic States in shaping the fiscal and monetary policy, setting common strategies in supporting business activities as well as introducing the Euro. The Committee will again follow the cross-committee approach and jointly with the colleagues from the Environmental Protection and Energy Committee will work on the development of environmentally friendly and sustainable transportation system and infrastructure, and development of bio fuel and other renewable energy resources.

Recommendation on Joint Measures in Developing a Common Baltic Business Environment was unanimously adopted by the national delegations of the Baltic Assembly.

Mr. Mart Jüssi, Vice Chairman of the Environmental Protection and Energy Committee, noted that the Committee has been active in discussing its priority issues, namely, cooperation in ensuring reliable energy supply to the Baltic countries and cooperation in developing a common electricity and gas market in the Baltic and Nordic countries and Western Europe. For this reason the roundtable discussion in April in Klaipeda was organized, where colleagues from the Nordic Council were also invited. Several members of the Committee continued to be active in taking part of the meetings organized by the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference Working Group on Energy and Climate Change. The two-year work of this Working Group has concluded by coming forth with four main recommendations and 29 consolidated

considerations and proposals to the governments of the Baltic Sea region countries and the Council of the Baltic Sea States. Many of these recommendations are also reflected in the Committee's "Resolution on Increasing Energy Efficiency, Energy Saving and Adapting to Climate Change".

Energy systems of the Baltic States are interconnected between each other, but almost totally separated from the Western Europe. Electricity supplies from eastern neighbours are also limited. After the closure of Ignalina nuclear power plant the Baltic energy system as "energy island" may face electricity supply shortages. What are the solutions to ensure security of energy supply? One of the solutions is the development of electricity interconnections. Interconnection of the Baltic region with the Northern and Central Europe is one of the priorities in the governments of the Baltic States and the EU. This regional approach is needed to replace the existing power capacities, meet the growing needs for electricity and enable the trade of electricity with the neighbouring member countries. Essential precondition for construction of any new interconnection in the Baltic region is the creation of a functioning, open and common Baltic electricity market. Another solution to ensure energy supply is the construction of nuclear power plants. Nuclear power plants in Lithuania was recognized as the most feasible and strategic solution for the region. There are decisions to build new power plants also in other neighbouring regions – the Kaliningrad region and Belarus, but development of nuclear power generation in the region must be consistent and balanced.

Regarding energy security it should be ensured on the basis of shared regional concerns rather than unilateral or bilateral solutions, and it should lead to genuine integration of energy systems rather than to creation of energy islands or to the provision of instruments for using energy as a tool for political pressure. Another risk is environmental threat – cumulative effect of pollution and harm to the Baltic Sea eco-system caused by disturbance of chemical and conventional weapons, and decline of environmental standards owing to the increased economic pressures as a result of economic downturn. Therefore the Committee has explicitly emphasised in its Resolution that economic crisis should be regarded as a challenge and a point of departure for developing the Baltic Sea region into a highly energy efficient and growing economy, at the same time substantially reducing its dependence on fossil fuel-based energy resources.

How to reach the balance in the use of traditional fossil fuel energy and renewable energy resources? Renewables are essential for economy to ensure self-sufficiency, and it has already been stated that promotion of the use of renewable energy resources is among the priorities of energy policy in the Baltic countries. More wide use of renewable energy can give a valuable contribution to the diversification and increase of reliability of energy supply, as well as to meeting the targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The potential of renewable energy resources in the region is very high. The Baltic Assembly and other regional cooperation

organisations should be used as tools in advancing and leading the energy issues to concrete results.

Next year the Committee will concentrate on climate change as an opportunity for development, for example, development of environmentally friendly and sustainable transportation system and infrastructure, development of renewable energy resources. The Committee will continue to make heavy pressure towards a common Baltic energy market; interconnections not only for electricity, but also for gas.

Resolution on Increasing Energy Efficiency, Energy Saving and Adapting to Climate Change was unanimously adopted by the national delegations of the Baltic Assembly.

Mr. Valerijus Simulik, Chairman of the Education, Science and Culture Committee, informed about the priorities of the Committee for 2009: promotion of the competitiveness of the Baltic countries; innovation, research and creative industries; and vocational and higher education in the Baltic countries. The Committee by discussing the current situation in science concluded that the Baltic States have to strengthen trilateral cooperation in education, science and research, which are crucial components for regional competitiveness. The following areas for trilateral cooperation can be pointed out: firstly, coordination of policies for research infrastructure development, secondly, formation of university unions and research institutions in order to promote their cooperation in developing joint study and research programmes, thirdly, coordination of joint efforts for applying to the EU funds. Fostering innovation and production on the local Baltic States' level would improve the balance of import and export and would allow the money to remain in the region. However regional competitiveness will only be effective when systemic cooperation between the higher education, research and industry takes place.

During the meetings the Committee has also discussed the use of EU funds in developing education and science in the Baltic States. The EU funds' system is an essential instrument for recovery of economies and improvement of competitiveness. However the Baltic countries that have been severely affected by the economic and financial crisis have difficulties in ensuring the required co-financing for the projects of the EU funds. Resources from the structural funds should also be allocated to restructure the programmes and provide training for teachers to be able to teach managerial skills. As a result of these discussions the Committee with the support of academicians, scientists and researchers of the Baltic States unanimously agreed to call the national governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania not to decrease available funding for science in the state budgets for 2010, and to take joint initiative to start negotiations with the European Commission to agree on preferential provision in acquirement of the EU funds by recalling the term of co-financing and pre-financing for scientific projects.

Mr. Valerijus Simulik condemned the situation that budget resources for education, research and science are cut by even up to 50%. Education is the most important factor in implementing economic development. Sharp differences in economic prosperity and income levels, weak social capital, resulting in insecurity and low quality of life are reasons for brain-drain and emigration. The BA Education, Science and Culture Committee has drafted the “Resolution on Development of Education in Alignment with Labour Market Needs”, in which it particularly draws attention to four major points: first, on trilateral cooperation and integration among the Baltic States outlining specific areas for these activities; secondly, on vocational education, which should be responsive to the needs of labour market; thirdly, on business studies that are included in all study programmes in order to promote business thinking; and fourthly, on innovation, science and research – as pillars for regional competitiveness.

Next year the Committee will continue its work on education issues by focusing on effective absorption of the EU funds and their wise use in the field of research. The Committee has addressed the Presidium suggesting to issue a publication on the culture of the Baltic States next in 2011 when the Baltic Assembly is going to celebrate its 20th Anniversary and Tallinn is going to be the Capital of Culture of the EU.

Resolution on Development of Education in Alignment with Labour Market Needs was unanimously adopted by the national delegations of the Baltic Assembly.

Mr. Liudvikas Sabutis, Chairman of the Legal Affairs and Security Committee, informed that this year the BA Legal Affairs and Security Committee focused on challenges and problems of the Schengen system. This issue, concentrating on topics of border policy and illegal migration as well as on implementation of the Schengen system and police cooperation, was broadly discussed in the roundtable discussion in March in Tallinn.

Being part of the Schengen area is important for the citizens of the Baltic States as the free movement of persons is one of the fundamental principles of the European Union. Especially convenient and crucially important it is for the people living in border regions. Joining the Schengen system has also created new possibilities for increased cooperation with other countries, joint actions, tactics and joint preventive measures as well as a common information system. However, it has also created numerous challenges and problems. The Baltic States are being used as the transit corridor. Especially illegal migrants from countries such as China, Sri Lanka, Colombia, and Pakistan use the Baltic States for transit. Now when the borders are open the Baltic states have to deal with cross-border crime which involves forged passports, visas and residence permits, smuggling of goods, especially cigarettes and alcohol, drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings etc. The present economic crisis even more increases crimes and creates serious risks for everyday security. Lack of financial resources, high unemployment and

despair generate bigger threats for society resulting in armed robberies, attacks and thefts. Therefore law enforcement institutions need to coordinate their activities, especially in the border regions, and the Baltic countries need to cooperate in order to prevent differences in legislative acts and regulations with the aim to improve coordination of activities among the respective services.

It was noted that it is also important to solve the social problems, which requires intense internal cooperation between agencies, in organising, for example, joint patrols of police and border guard, and external cooperation between neighbours, when exchanging experience and knowledge on crime prevention. Efforts of one country will be meaningless if other countries are not implementing measures to fight the organized crime, smuggling of highly taxed goods, “travelling” criminals, money and document forgery, missing persons, trafficking in human beings etc. Different control measures, like the EU VISA Information System database for exchanging visa information has to be improved. The Schengen Information System II, as a new generation system and upgrade to the SIS, ought to be further on elaborated. The law enforcement institutions of the Baltic countries have to increase cooperation, coordination of activities, exchange of experience, and harmonization of migration policies. In this aspect the parliamentary and governmental cooperation ought to be strengthened in order to prevent legislative differences.

On the basis of these discussions, the BA Legal Affairs and Security Committee has drafted the “Resolution on Increased Cooperation of the Baltic States in the Schengen Area”, in which it calls the national parliaments and governments of the Baltic countries and the Baltic Council of Ministers definite recommendations on the topic of regional security, cross-border crimes, information exchange, and cooperation between the Schengen countries and involved institutions. The Resolution calls on developing a holistic approach towards regional security, fight against regional crime, and efficient utilisation of available public instruments and assistance of the society; maintaining regular funding mechanisms for joint police operations and training in the EU neighbouring countries; improving the managerial level in order for law enforcement to be more effective in its fight against organised and serious cross-border crimes; and promoting faster launching of the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II). A new aspect which was viewed by the Committee is the refugees and asylum seekers policies. There was a joint seminar with the partners of the Nordic Council, where the Committee has learnt about integration and adaptation policies of refugees and asylum seekers in the Nordic countries. Even though the Baltic countries are not extensively and explicitly facing problems of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers it is necessary to assess the possible challenges in the near future.

The Committee’s priority issues next year will be devoted to the security of the society. The

economic situation has created new threats and criminalities, trade in human beings, smuggling etc, therefore it is necessary to give common response to the challenges, risks and threats to the security of societies.

Resolution on Increased Cooperation of the Baltic States in the Schengen Area was unanimously adopted by the national delegations of the Baltic Assembly.

Mr. Rytas Kupčinskas, Chairman of the Budget and Audit Committee, thanked the Head of the Secretariat Marika Laizāne-Jurkāne for her consistent hard work done in the area, and the members of the Committee who have worked hard and contributed to optimize the budget during this severe time. The task of the Budget and Audit Committee is to follow the implementation of the BA Budget and in close co-operation with the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly to prepare the budget for the forthcoming year. Mr. Rytas Kupčinskas introduced to the draft report of the Budget of the Baltic Assembly 2008. The source of the Baltic Assembly budget in 2008 were membership fees from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in amount of 330,288 EUR in total as well as amount of saving from the Baltic Assembly Budget 2007 in amount of 22 EUR. According to the report 298,739 EUR have been used for the activities of the Baltic Assembly in 2008. As some of the planned events have been postponed to 2009 the residual part of the budget in amount of 31,549 EUR has been included in the Budget of 2009. The budget of the Baltic Assembly has been used to ensure the following activities of the Baltic Assembly: meetings of the Presidium and Committees, cooperation with the Nordic Council, the Benelux Parliament, the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly as well as participation in the work of the Standing Committee of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, organisation of the Session and the Baltic Council; and the Baltic Assembly Prizes in Literature, the Arts and Science, and for the Secretariat.

Decision on the Baltic Assembly Budget Report for 2008 was unanimously adopted by the national delegations of the Baltic Assembly.

Mr. Rytas Kupčinskas, Chairman of the Budget and Audit Committee, continued with introducing to the draft budget of the Baltic Assembly for 2010. After serious negotiations it was decided that the budget for 2010 is decreased by 17% or 56,148 EUR compared to the budget 2009. Membership payments of the national parliaments of the Baltic States will amount to EUR 91,380. The budgetary positions of the BA Session, Presidium, Committees, Prizes, Secretariat were decreased by 17 – 20% on average by decreasing accommodation and information expenses, refusing from representation expenses and by decreasing all costs for each budgetary position. Pro tem the Baltic Assembly has refused from the BA Basketball

tournament. It was decided not to decrease position of international cooperation with the partners in the Nordic Council, the Benelux Parliament and the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly. Since last year there is a position of reserve funds. According to experience of other international organisations it was agreed to establish such position on savings in order to have a stable financial mechanism. Due to serious budget decrease it was decided not to channel funds to this position for the Budget 2010.

Decision on the Baltic Assembly Budget for 2010 was unanimously adopted by the national delegations of the Baltic Assembly.

Dr. Mantas Adomėnas, President of the Baltic Assembly, introduced to the Declaration on New Challenges for Security Agenda, to the Declaration Concerning Proposals Related to the Solution of the Problem of Nagorno-Karabakh, and to the Declaration on the Situation in Georgia, and proposed their adoption.

The Declaration on New Challenges for Security Agenda, the Declaration Concerning Proposals Related to the Solution of the Problem of Nagorno-Karabakh, and the Declaration on the Situation in Georgia was unanimously adopted by the national delegations of the Baltic Assembly.

Adoption of the Final document (see Annex No.3)

The Final document of the 28th Session of the Baltic Assembly was unanimously adopted by the Baltic Assembly national delegations.

Election of the President and Vice Presidents of the Baltic Assembly for 2010

President – Mrs Ērika Zommere (Latvia), Vice Presidents – Mr Trivimi Velliste (Estonia), and Dr Mantas Adomėnas (Lithuania).

Election of Chairpersons and Vice Chairpersons of the BA Committees

Chairman of the BA Economic Affairs, Communications and Informatics Committee – Mr Vents Armands Krauklis (Latvia), Vice Chairmen – Mr Peep Aru (Estonia) and Mr Bronius Pauža (Lithuania).

Chairman of the BA Education, Science and Culture Committee – Mrs Baiba Rivža (Latvia), Vice Chairpersons – Mrs Helle Kalda (Estonia) and Mr Valerijus Simulik (Lithuania).

Chairman of the BA Environmental Protection and Energy Committee – Mrs. Sarmīte Ķīkuste (Latvia), Vice Chairmen – Mr Mart Jüssi (Estonia) and Mr Jonas Stanevičius (Lithuania).

Chairman of the BA Legal Affairs and Security Committee – Mr Dzintars Jaundžeikars (Latvia), Vice Chairmen – Mr Kalvi Kõva (Estonia) and Mr Liudvikas Sabutis (Lithuania),.

Chairman of the BA Social Affairs Committee – Mrs Silva Bendrāte (Latvia), Vice Chairs – Mrs Tatjana Muravjova (Estonia) and Mr Gediminas Navaitis (Lithuania),.

Chairman of the BA Budget and Audit Committee – Mr Vents Armands Krauklis (Latvia), Vice Chairmen – Mr Peep Aru (Estonia) and Mr Rytas Kupčinskas (Lithuania).

Address by the newly elected President of the Baltic Assembly

Mrs. Ērika Zommere, Vice President of the Baltic Assembly, noted that it will be a great challenge to assume the post of the President of the Baltic Assembly. Mrs Zommere emphasised that the Latvian parliament, particularly H.E. Gundars Daudze, Speaker of the Latvian parliament, has expressed its great support to Latvian delegation during its presidency of the Baltic Assembly.

During the Iron Curtain era, the Baltic countries were aware that without solidarity and unity they cannot be free. On 23 August the 20th anniversary of the Baltic Way was celebrated, which was undeniable proof of the solidarity and unity of these three nations. During the current crisis the Baltic States also have to speak with one voice. Only by joint effort, joint decisions, and joint strategies the Baltic States can get out of the deep economic and social abyss. The world perceives the Baltic States as a single entity. Today the Baltic States have to join their efforts in forming a common social, economic, and finance policy, shaping a common system of health care and education, and drafting a common security agenda. Therefore, during Latvia's presidency, the Baltic Assembly will address concrete issues and will focus on concrete cooperation projects in developing a regional partnership of the Baltic States in economic, social, education and research spheres. Such partnership requires close cooperation with the executive branch - the Baltic Council of Ministers.

In comparison to other forms of regional cooperation, cooperation of the Baltic States is a comparatively new regional phenomenon. Adjusting the activities of the Baltic Assembly to the

new situation and increasing its efficiency depend on the political interest of its members in the future work. In order for the parliamentary organisation to be successful, it is necessary to clearly define the goals.

Main goals of Latvia's presidency are as follows. The first priority is economic stabilisation of the Baltic States and the region's recovery of competitiveness. Parliamentary discussions are needed about a joint monetary and fiscal policy, and introduction of Euro. Agreement is needed regarding common policies for supporting business. A single energy market is needed to be developed and joint renewable-energy projects have to be carried out. The second priority is security of societies and the quality of life. It is necessary to have a joint answer to the security challenges whether they are classic or modern security challenges. Active involvement in European and transatlantic discussions on the new security architecture by adopting a common Baltic stance and expressing common interests is essential. Other questions related to the quality of life: is there agreement regarding joint procurements of medicines and medical appliances; how can the European Union funds for research be used jointly; how to benefit from climate change by jointly developing environment-friendly businesses? The third priority is strategic cooperation between the Baltic States and Nordic countries. Together with the colleagues from the Nordic countries, it is necessary to discuss common partnerships and common initiatives which are strategically important for all of the eight involved countries. The aim of the cooperation between the Baltic States and Nordic countries is to form balanced and sustainable development in the Northern Europe. The fourth priority is cooperation between the Baltic States and Benelux countries. The Benelux countries can be regarded as a special ambassador of small countries within the European Union. The Benelux Parliament has accumulated excellent experience in implementing cross-border projects, harmonising social policies, coordinating health care, as well as harmonising its positions with the EU policies. Experience of the Benelux countries can be useful in solving Schengen-related problems, shaping the European policy and implementing joint cross-border projects. The fifth priority is an active policy with regard to the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly. GUAM is interested in benefiting from the Baltic experience with regard to developing regional cooperation, the process of reforms and integration into the EU and NATO.

Mrs. Ērika Zommere expressed hope that parliamentarians of the Baltic States will be able to deal with diverse interests, solve conflicts and overcome hardships not by using force but by debating, disputing and arguing. In order to facilitate the Baltic unity, wisdom, knowledge and openness to cooperation is needed.

Mrs. Marion Pedersen, Member of the Nordic Council Presidium, Denmark, informed about the letter sent by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Danish Parliament regarding the open

meeting with the Baltic and Nordic parliamentarians and the World Bank to be held on 25 January 2010 in Copenhagen. The suggestion is for the Baltic and Nordic parliamentarians to establish a regional chapter of parliamentarian network of the World Bank. To the meeting experts have been invited to address the financial crisis and investments in renewable energy.

President of
the Baltic Assembly

Mantas ADOMĖNAS
Republic of Lithuania

Vice President of
the Baltic Assembly

Ērika ZOMMERE
Republic of Latvia

Vice President of
the Baltic Assembly

Trivimi VELLISTE
Republic of Estonia

Head of the Secretariat
of the Baltic Assembly

Marika LAIZĀNE-JURKĀNE

Prepared by **Silga LEJASMEIERE**
Senior Consultant of the BA Secretariat

LIST OF ANNEXES

- Annex 1:** Joint Statement of the 15th Baltic Council
- Annex 2:** Joint Statement of the GUAM PA and the Baltic Assembly
- Annex 3:** Final Document of the 28th Session of the Baltic Assembly

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE 15TH BALTIC COUNCIL

On 27 November 2009 in Vilnius, the Republic of Lithuania, the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers convened for the 15th Baltic Council to evaluate progress on joint priorities of co-operation for 2009 and to set cooperation priorities for 2010.

The Baltic Council highly estimates the joint commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Baltic Way which took place within 2009. The Baltic Way was a historic act of the Baltic solidarity and non-violent protest against the Soviet occupation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as a consequence of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. The recent decision to include the Baltic Way in the UNESCO Programme Memory of the World International Register is a confirmation of the historic significance of this world-wide phenomenon.

The Baltic Council confirms the need for full scale trilateral cooperation of the Baltic States on parliamentary and governmental level and expresses strong determination to further strengthen the ties among Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in shaping EU and NATO policies based on shared values and strategic interests of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The Baltic Council declares the following:

1) recalling recent resolutions of the European Parliament and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, we welcome the initiative to proclaim the 23rd of August as a Europe-wide Day of Remembrance for the victims of Stalinism and Nazism. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will continue their joint efforts with a view to preserve historical memory and ensure honest and open appraisal of common European totalitarian legacy of the 20th century;

2) we shall pay special attention to the stabilisation of economies of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, underlining achievement of sustainable growth promoting competitiveness and encouraging development of knowledge economy and research activities;

3) we shall provide increased support to joint energy and transport infrastructure projects such as Baltic Railway (Rail Baltica), Via Baltica, and projects included in the Action Plan of BEMIP, which will increase competitiveness of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on regional and global level; we shall seek close cooperation while implementing the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region;

4) we shall enhance awareness of the present international security situation and the new security threats and challenges, among them – energy security, climate change and cyber crime; enhance NATO visibility in the region and continue development of joint Baltic projects such as Baltic Battalion, Baltic Defence College and others;

5) we shall promote an integrated and optimized regional approach to ensure energy security by creating new generation capacities, diversifying energy supplies, creating a common Baltic energy market and developing interconnections of infrastructure with the rest of the EU;

6) we shall pay special attention to climate change issues and develop strategies and measures for mitigation and for reducing the consequences through adaptation;

7) we shall coordinate policies to ensure a flexible and secure labour market by developing crosssectoral approaches combining social security policies, life-long learning and vocational education and economic development strategies.

The Baltic Council defines the following priorities for co-operation in 2010:

- economic stabilisation and increase of competitiveness;
- security, including energy security and environment issues;
- strategic cooperation between Baltic and Nordic countries.

The next 16th Baltic Council will be held during the Latvian presidency on 21–23 October 2010 in Rīga, the Republic of Latvia.

Dr. Mantas ADOMĖNAS

Vygaudas UŠACKAS

President of the Baltic Assembly

Chairman of the Cooperation Council of
the Baltic Council of Ministers

Vilnius, 27 November 2009

**JOINT STATEMENT
OF THE GUAM PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
AND THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY**

The GUAM Parliamentary Assembly and the Baltic Assembly,

welcoming the Declaration on Cooperation between the Baltic Assembly and the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly, signed by the Chairman of the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly and the President of the Baltic Assembly in Vilnius, the Republic of Lithuania on 19 June 2009;

confirming that the foundation of such cooperation is promotion of democratic, socio-economic and cultural development of the GUAM and Baltic countries, contribution to resolution of the protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and provision of political support for regional cooperation;

willing to further develop cooperation between the GUAM and the Baltic regions in the spheres of mutual interest such as energy/energy security, conflict resolution in the GUAM area, climate change and environmental protection, social welfare, healthcare, culture, science and education, cross-border cooperation, trade and economy, infrastructure and communications, support and sharing of the experience on the issues of EU and NATO integration, and implementation of international policy;

underlining that protracted conflicts in the GUAM area constitute the main threat to regional and international peace, security and stability and a threat to democracy and economic development;

considering that the unstable character of supply of energy resources creates a threat to economic development of the region and difficulties for the population,

call on the international community to support the GUAM States in facilitating a peaceful resolution of the conflicts in the GUAM area based on norms and principles of international law, the fundamental ones being the principles of territorial integrity and inviolability of borders;

stress that the territory of a state may not be a subject of acquisition or military occupation resulting from the threat or use of force in breach of the relevant norms of international law. No territorial acquisitions and the resulting self-declared entities may be recognized as legal under any circumstances whatsoever;

support the European aspirations of the GUAM Member States and agree to have a regular exchange of experience on the issues of EU and NATO integration;

intend to coordinate the steps aimed at strengthening energy security through the use and development of pipeline networks and other transport infrastructure to increase export and transit of energy supplies, diversification of their supply and enhanced coordination of the development of alternative energy sources;

consider as unacceptable the use of energy supply and transit as a means of pressure on producer, transit and consumer countries, and urge all players of the energy market to develop transparent mutual relations on the basis of partnership, equality, and mutual benefit;

recommend to respective state institutions to present specific draft proposals to be implemented in the spheres of mutual interest within the GUAM – Baltic cooperation framework,

have agreed to coordinate the time and venue of the next round of consultations between the GUAM PA and the Baltic Assembly via diplomatic channels.

Dr. Mantas ADOMĖNAS

Vano KHUKHUNAISHVILI

President of the Baltic Assembly

Chairman of the GUAM Parliamentary
Assembly

Vilnius, 27 November 2009

**FINAL DOCUMENT
OF THE 28TH SESSION OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY**

The Baltic Assembly,
having convened on 26–28 November 2009 in Vilnius, the Republic of Lithuania, for its 28th Session,

having discussed cooperation of the Baltic States in circumstances of economic crisis and future tasks for cooperation of the Baltic States in increasing security, sustainability and growth as well as the agenda, priorities and development of cooperation among institutions of the Baltic states in the long-term perspective,

adopted the following documents:

Resolution on Increased Cooperation of the Baltic States in the Schengen Area;

Resolution on Increasing Energy Efficiency, Energy Saving and Adapting to Climate Change;

Resolution on Ensuring Sustainable Economic and Social Development in the Baltic States;

Resolution on Development of Education in Alignment with Labour Market Needs;

Declaration on New Challenges for Security Agenda;

Recommendation on Joint Measures for Development of Common Baltic Business Environment;

Declaration Concerning Proposals Related to the Solution of the Problem of Nagorno-Karabakh;

Declaration on the Situation in Georgia;

approved the Baltic Assembly Budget Report for 2008;

adopted the Baltic Assembly Budget for 2010;

defined the following priorities of the Baltic Assembly for 2010:

- economic stabilization of the Baltic States;
- safe society and the quality of life;
- strategic cooperation between the Baltic States and the Nordic countries;

defined the following priorities for co-operation between the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers for 2010:

- economic stabilization of the Baltic States and promotion of regional competitiveness;
- security of the Baltic States;
- strategic cooperation between the Baltic States and Nordic countries, and

decided that the 29th Session of the Baltic Assembly will take place on 21–23 October 2010 in Rīga, the Republic of Latvia.

President of
the Baltic Assembly

Dr. Mantas ADOMĖNAS
Republic of Lithuania

Vice President of
the Baltic Assembly

Ērika ZOMMERE
Republic of Latvia

Vice President of
the Baltic Assembly

Trivimi VELLISTE
Republic of Estonia

Vilnius, 28 November 2009

RESOLUTION

ON INCREASED COOPERATION OF THE BALTIC STATES IN THE SCHENGEN AREA

The Baltic Assembly,

emphasising that the Baltic States' joining the Schengen area on 21 December 2007 is of great significance to their citizens because free movement of persons is one of the fundamental principles of the European Union;

considering that international crime, smuggling, drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, etc., create additional problems for the Schengen area states;

underlining the need for improved legal harmonisation among the Members and multilateral coordination of activities aimed at ensuring security;

understanding the necessity of balance between instruments of control and free movement of persons;

acknowledging that the global economic crisis results in higher levels of illegal migration, organised crime, smuggling and other forms of crime,

calls on the parliaments and governments of the Baltic States and the Baltic Council of Ministers for:

- development of a uniform approach towards regional security, fight against regional crime, and efficient utilisation of available public instruments and assistance of the society;
- maintenance of regular funding mechanisms for joint police operations and training in the EU neighbour countries;
- improvement of the managerial level in order for law enforcement to be more effective in its fight against organised and serious international crimes;
- aspiration to expeditious exchange of information between law enforcement institutions of the Baltic States,
- promotion of faster launching of the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II).

Vilnius, 28 November 2009

RESOLUTION

ON INCREASING ENERGY EFFICIENCY, ENERGY SAVING AND ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The Baltic Assembly,

noting the problem of the Baltic “energy island”, the EU energy and climate change policies as well as the conclusions of the BSPC Working Group on Energy and Climate Change;

acknowledging the need for strengthened cooperation and joint actions to reduce the vulnerability to climate change and to improve the adaptability to the consequences of climate change, and to prevent and manage the negative consequences of natural hazards caused by climate change;

understanding that the energy and climate change policy and strategy are closely interlinked with;

taking into consideration the great potential of renewable energy production in the region that has not been fully exploited yet,

calls on the parliaments and governments of the Baltic States and the Baltic Council of Ministers and the Council of the Baltic Sea States,

with regard to economic crisis – recognize it as a challenge and point of departure for developing the Baltic Sea region into a highly energy efficient and growing economy, and at the same time substantially reducing the dependence on fossil fuel based energy sources;

with regard to renewable energy – promote the establishment and use of all kinds of renewable and local energy resources that are appropriate and to develop the necessary infrastructure;

with regard to transmission systems and interconnections – increase investments in construction and upgrading new electricity transmissions in the region, to create a common market for selling Baltic electricity through enhancing interconnectivity within Europe as a whole, and to promote the establishment and harmonization of laws and regulations in the region’s energy sector in order to accelerate the development of an open market to promote competitiveness and security of energy supply;

with regard to energy efficiency and energy saving – promote energy saving and energy efficiency initiatives in all sectors of society, to pay attention to the need for renovating housing and to promote the establishment of combined heat and power

production;

with regard to implementation of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy – expect that the European Parliament will focus on the challenges to regional environmental sustainability posed by the implementation of large-scale infrastructural projects and will take notice that the Strategy is aimed at reducing environmental risks;

with regard to climate-friendly transport infrastructure – support and facilitate the development and establishment of climate-friendly and inter-modal transport systems,

with regard to education, research and development and business opportunities – involve civil society, the public and all relevant educational establishments by providing adequate means and financing from the national budgets in the development and implementation of responsible climate solutions and behaviours, and to identify development and export potentials for technologies and production of renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy saving.

Vilnius, 28 November 2009

RESOLUTION

ON ENSURING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE BALTIC STATES

The Baltic Assembly,

noting the problems of cross-border labour market, mobility and youth unemployment, the European Union Directives as well as conclusions by the BSPC Working Group on Labour Market and Social Welfare;

underlining that global economic crisis has seriously affected the economic development and social welfare of the Baltic States;

acknowledging that the Baltic States have to focus more on joint cooperation projects in areas such as development of a common labour and education market, a joint health care system, joint business incubators and clusters, etc.;

emphasizing that the governments of the Baltic States need to coordinate social, educational, regional and health policies,

calls on the parliaments and governments of the Baltic States and the Baltic Council of Ministers:

to elaborate development-oriented stabilisation programme by identifying the economic potential of each individual country and of all the Baltic States together;

to decrease the unemployment level by target-oriented use of EU funds;

to allocate resources for training and re-training of the unemployed;

to improve cooperation between public institutions and entrepreneurs in order to facilitate a unified approach in employment matters;

not to reduce the period of payment of the unemployment benefit;

to develop a complex approach in the social support and employment policy;

to create a targeted social protection and thus minimising social risks;

with regard to cross-border labour market and mobility

– in so far as possible, to strengthen the existing employment information centres or establish new employment information centres particularly at the state borders to enable cross-border labour market participants to receive the necessary information about social security issues, employment and tax laws, as well as other regulatory legal acts in the country where the person wishes to work;

– to contribute to the enhancement of the competence and professionalism of advisors working in information centres;

- to identify barriers to mobility and put effort to dismantle them;
- to share information, experience and best practice about the work of the employment_information centres throughout the Baltic Sea region by organising forums, ensuring internet platforms etc.;
- to expand transport routes and enhance the quality of local public transport in border regions in order to ease travel for commuters thus improving economic growth in the region;

with regard to promoting integration of the youth into the labour market

- to ensure that all pupils in general education schools are introduced to career orientation;
- to make efforts to provide young people with the opportunity to gain work experience in enterprises, public institutions and other organisations, including vocational schools;
- to invite employers to inform young people about work experience placements and training opportunities;
- to intensify creation of training places with employers and workers' representatives;
- to develop special programmes to integrate young people with special needs into training and employment.

Vilnius, 28 November 2009

RESOLUTION

ON DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN ALIGNMENT WITH LABOUR MARKET NEEDS

The Baltic Assembly,

noting and acknowledging that well-developed education system is the main prerequisite for contributing to the competitiveness of a country and development of knowledge-based economies in the Baltic States;

underlining that the development of education, science and research system must be among the priorities for the countries even during severe economic crisis;

understanding that education system and labour market have strong reciprocal relations,

calls on the parliaments and governments of the Baltic States and the Baltic Council of Ministers:

with regard to cooperation and integration among the Baltic States

– facilitate the formation of networks of universities and research institutions, and to promote their cooperation in developing joint study and research programmes;

– coordinate the policies for research infrastructure development;

– coordinate joint efforts for applying to the EU funds;

– work together in research and development sector, to strengthen links among funding agencies and research councils, to exchange peers for scientific evaluation;

– forge research and business links, to identify partnership opportunities for collaborative research and business projects, to identify areas for joint research and development projects;

– develop joint student and doctoral student exchange programmes, by exchanging experts to evaluate study programmes and higher educational establishments and by developing exchange programmes for academicians and researchers;

– support and promote joint initiatives in the European Research Area;

– share the expertise and supporting reform agendas;

with regard to vocational education – initiate reforms in order to make the system of vocational education responsive to labour market needs;

with regard to business studies – include study programmes that are related to business competence in the curricula of professional education, and to develop approach to promote business thinking and motivation to take up business activities;

with regard to innovation, science and research

- attract knowledge and talent to the Baltic States in order to create a harmonised and target-oriented policy of intervention;
- develop new joint activities in the system of education and research, thus facilitating the development of innovations in the Baltic States;
- involve enterprises in the work of trans-national knowledge or excellence centres and facilitate participation of enterprises in international research and technology development projects and technology transfer;
- identify and initiate joint activities to stimulate knowledge and talent attraction to the region by the use of Baltic Sea region higher education system quality;
- establish a joint cluster, an international centre or a counselling centre for the purpose of attracting foreign students from Asia thus joining efforts in the area to develop education as the market for export;
- promote training of high level specialists in other regional higher educational establishments, regularly attract guest professors, facilitate the mobility of researchers, professors and students;
- minimize brain-drain,
- find the right balance between higher education, non-university higher education and vocational training.

Vilnius, 28 November 2009

DECLARATION

ON NEW CHALLENGES FOR SECURITY AGENDA

The changing security environment in the early twenty-first century creates new challenges for all countries, whereas the concept of security, challenges, threats, and vulnerabilities has changed significantly. The arsenal of threats and the means for their prevention are closely related to a country's internal development, the state of the international system, and changes in its structure, as well as internal dynamics of the system units. Since the nature of the Cold War has changed, in many EU and NATO countries a wide security concept has emerged that has added economic, societal, energy, and environmental dimensions to the narrow military and diplomatic functions. In a changing security environment, new threats are emerging, and not all of them are predictable.

The Baltic Assembly appreciates the efforts of parliaments and governments of the Nordic countries to promote the Nordic cooperation on foreign affairs and security policy, which started in 2008. The Baltic Assembly will carefully follow Nordic parliamentary and governmental discussions on the cooperation among the five Nordic countries. The Baltic Assembly expresses hope that when preparing their cooperation strategy the Nordic countries will take into consideration not only individual security demands and interests but also those of other regional partners and of partners in the global arena.

The Baltic Assembly declares:

it is important to develop a democratic society, peaceful and constructive relations with neighbouring countries by establishing democracy and stability in the region;

the geographical proximity, common foreign and security interests and serious changes in security agendas contribute to the development of a new approach to the resolution of security problems with a view to addressing threats in a co-ordinated and complementary way, avoiding duplication;

the European Union, NATO, and other international organisations, working on new security strategy concepts, should also hold local and regional discussions on a new security concept at the Baltic level;

for increasing security on the regional level, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania should work actively on implementing such EU partnership strategies as the EU Baltic Sea Strategy, the EU Eastern Partnership, and the EU Neighbourhood initiatives,

all the countries should develop their ability to meet new challenges for national

security, including cyber attacks, information warfare, and attempts to destabilise societies and states.

Vilnius, 28 November 2009

RECOMMENDATION

ON JOINT MEASURES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF COMMON BALTIC BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The Baltic Assembly,

recognising limited resources of the Baltic States and serious impact of global economic crisis on sustainable development of the Baltic region;

highlighting strategic interest of the Baltic States in closer partnership model in a wider Baltic Sea region which provides consolidation of resources, cooperation and sharing of experience;

emphasising that joint efforts to improve competitiveness by using common knowledge resources, innovations and technological excellence will facilitate development not only of each country but of the whole region,

calls on the parliaments and governments of the Baltic States and the Baltic Council of Ministers:

to develop joint strategies for sustainable development of the Baltic States in energy, communication and technologies, medicine, creative industries, transport and logistics, pharmacology and other fields which would ensure increase of competitiveness of the Baltic States;

to form joint Baltic business incubators;

to coordinate activities and economic actions in the economic zone of the Baltic Sea,

to develop harmonised business in the Baltic States by harmonising fiscal and tax policies and legal norms in the Baltic States, to assess the existing regulatory acts in a more critical way and accelerate the drafting of new ones in order to reduce obstacles for innovative entrepreneurship.

Vilnius, 28 November 2009

DECLARATION

CONCERNING PROPOSALS RELATED TO THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH

The Baltic Assembly,

expressing concern over the persistence of regional conflicts in the Southern Caucasus;

supporting a peaceful solution of the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh based on the main norms and principles of international law;

emphasising the principles of non-use of force and territorial integrity in accordance with norms of international law,

expresses hope that Armenia and Azerbaijan will, in the nearest future, manage to find the solution acceptable to both sides;

supports the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group towards a peaceful settlement of the crisis on the basis of the principles, commitments, and provisions of the OSCE;

supports the efforts of the EU Member States and other countries to solve the problem through peaceful dialogue.

Vilnius, 28 November 2009

DECLARATION

ON THE SITUATION IN GEORGIA

The Baltic Assembly,

concerned about continuing tension in the relations between Georgia and the Russian Federation, which is increasingly escalating after the military aggression by the Russian Federation against Georgia and occupation of a part of its territory, just over one year ago, in August 2008;

expressing its growing concern over the actions of the Russian Federation who is entrenching occupation of the parts of the sovereign and independent state of Georgia and concentrating its military forces in such Georgia's regions as Abkhazia and South Osetia, thus violating the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia as well as jeopardizing international peace, security and stability;

regretting about the decision of the Russian Federation to veto continuation of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Observer Missions in Georgia, since suspension of these missions contributes to further worsening of the complicated situation in the region and obviously does not meet the interests of the civil population of this conflict zone;

reminding of the importance of ensuring full and unconditional fulfilment of the commitments of the Russian Federation, in compliance with the cease-fire agreements of 12 August 2008 and 8 September 2008, primarily with regard to withdrawal of the Russian troops illegitimately deployed on Georgia's territory;

reiterating support to preservation of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia without violating its internationally recognized borders,

urges all the countries to refrain from actions that could destabilize the situation in the South Caucasus even more and thus harm stability and security in the whole Europe;

urges the Russian Federation to start fulfilling its commitments listed in the 12 August 2008 and 8 September 2008 agreements: to withdraw the occupational forces from the territory of Georgia recognized by the international community and engage in constructive co-operation to resolve the issues related to the activities of international Observer Missions in the entirely internationally recognized territory of Georgia, since these missions are indispensable with a view to enhancing mutual trust, stability and security in these regions and ensuring provision of humanitarian assistance to civil population;

invites the governments of the European Union and the NATO member countries,

representatives of the national parliaments, the European Parliament, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the United Nations Organisation and its members, the Council of Europe, civil society and the international community to continue active pursuance of the policy of non-recognition of the alleged “independence” of Georgia’s regions of Abkhazia and South Osetia and to increase pressure on the Russian Federation to oblige it to fulfil its international commitments, to continue to raise the issues of ensuring Georgia’s territorial integrity and seek for solid and efficient solutions in this regard, invoking the Geneva international peace talks;

urges the governments of the European Union and NATO, the European Parliament, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the United Nations Organisation, the Council of Europe, civil society and the international community to be active mediators in resolving the situation of the IDPs from Abkhazia and South Osetia and provide conditions for them to return to their homes in compliance with the requirements of the international documents, including the Resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations of 9 September 2009, by guaranteeing their security and human dignity, and by ensuring that they receive just compensation for the losses incurred from the parties responsible;

underlines the importance of continuation of democracy development and local reforms in Georgia for it to become a fully-fledged member of the European and Euro-Atlantic structures and to efficiently solve its internal political problems, as well as the necessity to create the model of governance attractive to the population of Abkhazia and South Osetia regions and capable of securing minority rights,

urges all the political forces of Georgia to unite their efforts and conduct a constructive dialogue with a view to cherishing democratic values, entrenching the principles of the rule of law and seeking joint solutions in implementing important local reforms through promotion of the broad support of Georgia’s society.

Vilnius, 28 November 2009

D E C I S I O N

ON THE HEAD OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT

The 28th Session of the Baltic Assembly decides:

to prolong appointment of MARIKA LAIZĀNE-JURKĀNE as the Head of the Baltic Assembly Secretariat from 1 August 2010 to 23 October 2010,

to grant MARIKA LAIZĀNE-JURKĀNE all rights and obligations of the Head of the Baltic Assembly Secretariat, including the right to sign financial documents of the Baltic Assembly as budgetary funds of the Baltic Assembly permit.

President of
the Baltic Assembly

Vice President of
the Baltic Assembly

Vice President of
the Baltic Assembly

Dr. Mantas ADOMĖNAS
Republic of Lithuania

Ērika ZOMMERE
Republic of Latvia

Trivimi VELLISTE
Republic of Estonia

Vilnius, 28 November 2009

D E C I S I O N

ON THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY BUDGET REPORT FOR 2008

The Baltic Assembly approves the Baltic Assembly Budget Report for the year 2008.

President of
the Baltic Assembly
Assembly

Vice President of
the Baltic Assembly

Vice President of
the Baltic

Dr. Mantas ADOMĖNAS
VELLISTE
Republic of Lithuania

Ērika ZOMMERE
Republic of Latvia

Trivimi
Republic of Estonia

Vilnius, 28 November 2009

Baltic Assembly

Budget Report for 2008

I. BA BUDGET INCOME IN 2008

Source of the BA Budget income in 2008:

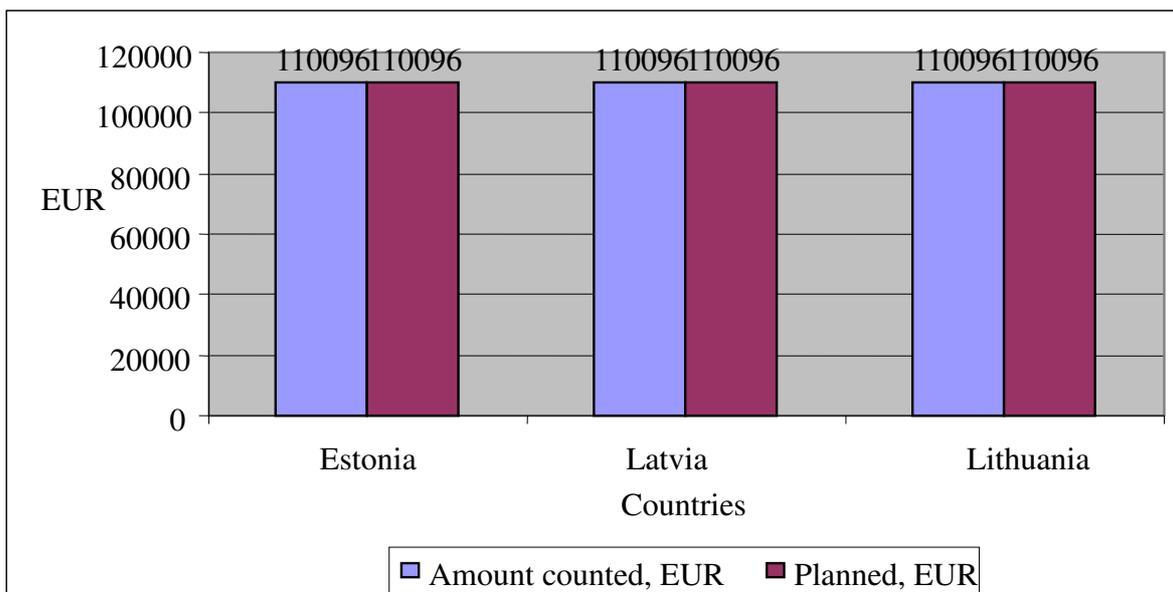
- Membership fees from the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania in 2008;
- Amount of saving of the BA Budget 2007.

MEMBERSHIP FEES TRANSFERRED TO THE BA BUDGET 2008

31.12.2008, EUR

The BA Budget 2008 sets membership fees from each national parliament in amount of EUR 110, 096. The total BA budget 2008 is EUR 330,288. Amount of saving of the BA Budget 2007 is EUR 22, total of the BA Budget 2008 is EUR 330,310.

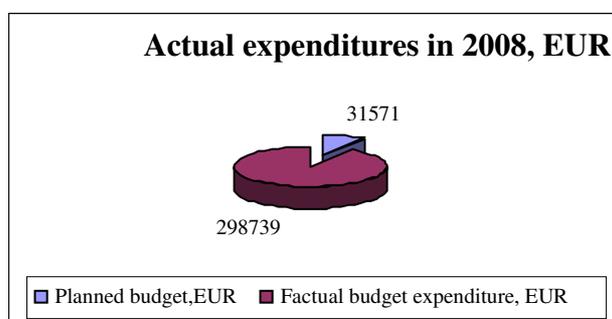
Country	Amount counted in, EUR	Amount counted in, EUR	%, EUR
Estonia	EEK 1,722628	110,096	100%
Latvia	LVL 77, 376	110,096	100%
Lithuania	LTL 380,140	110,096	100%



II. BA BUDGET EXPENDITURES in 2008

Summary of the Baltic Assembly's Expenditures as of 31.01.09¹, EUR

Planned budget, EUR	Factual budget expenditure, EUR	Factual budget expenditure, %
330,310	298,739	90

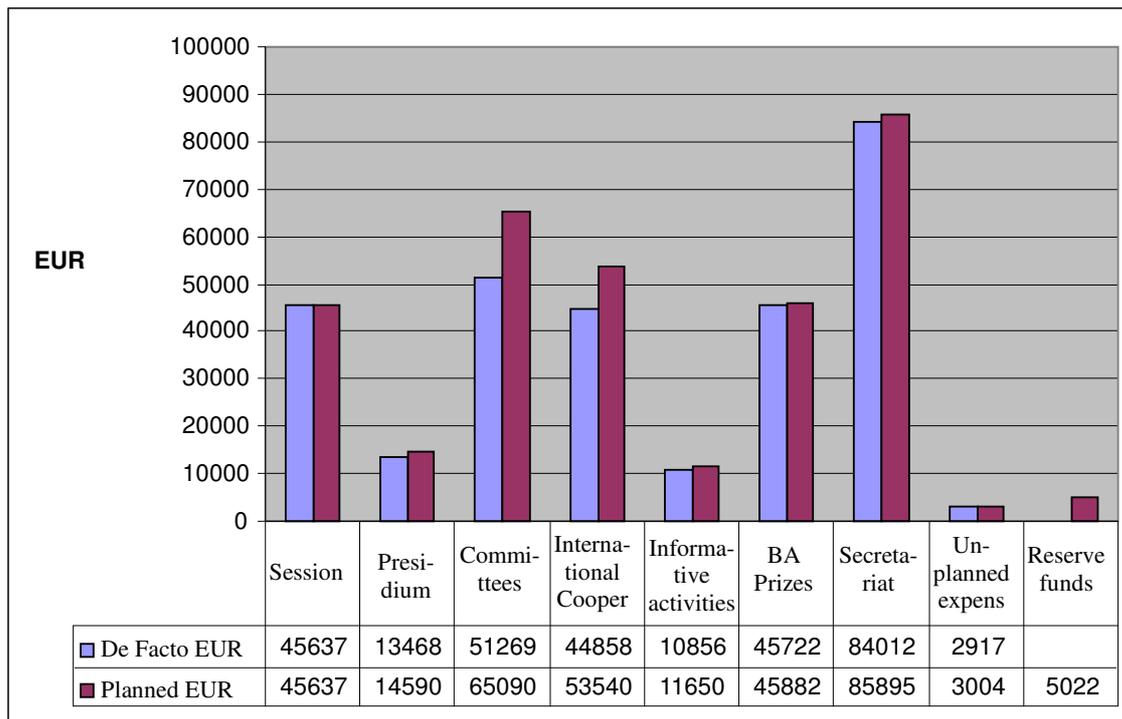


Summary of the factual expenditure of the Baltic Assembly (on 31.01.09, EUR)

Event	De facto, EUR	De Facto, %	Planned in 2008, EUR
Session	45,637	100	45,637
Presidium	13,468	92	14,590

¹ BA – NC Annual Summit 2008 took place on 22–23 January 2009 in Tallinn, Estonia. Taking into account that financial funds for organising of the BA – NC Annual Summit have been included in the BA Budget 2008, the financial year of the BA Budget 2008 has been closed on 31.01.09.

Committees	51,269	78	65,090
International Cooperation	44,858	84	53,540
Informative activities and other events	10,856	93	11,650
BA Prizes	45,722	99	45,882
Secretariat	84,012	98	85,895
Unplanned expenses	2,917	97	3,004
Reserve funds	–	–	5,022
TOTAL	298,739	90	330,310



1. Session of the Baltic Assembly

The 27th Session of the Baltic Assembly, the 14th Baltic Council and the Conference on the “Baltic Sea Strategy and Energy Security” took place on 4–6 December 2008 in Viljandi, Estonia.

During the 27th BA Session, the following meetings were held:

- Meetings of the BA Presidium;
- Meetings of the BA committees;
- Meeting of the BA Presidium with the chairpersons and deputy chairpersons of the BA committees;
- Meetings with international delegations.

The total amount of funds allocated for the BA Session and the Baltic Council was **EUR 45,637**. Total expenditures related to these events amounted to **EUR 45,637**, which included contract work, transportation and hotel expenses, catering expenses, rent and lease expenses, preparation of information materials, representation and organizational expenses. **Balance: 0 EUR.**

2. Meetings of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly

The following meetings of the BA Presidium, participation in the NB8 Speakers' meeting, in the Sessions of the Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Council and the Nordic Council, as well as one unplanned meeting of the Baltic Assembly Presidium meeting took place between January and December 2008:

- unplanned BA Presidium meeting: 21 January, Brussels (Belgium);
- BA Presidium meeting: 1 March, Tallinn (Estonia);
- Joint Meeting between the BA – BICC Presidiums, participation of the BA Presidium in the BICC Session: 6–9 March, Luxemburg;
- BA Presidium meeting: 6 June, Kuressaare (Estonia);
- Joint Meeting between the BA – BICC Presidiums, participation of the BA Presidium in the BICC Session: 12–15 June, Luxemburg;
- participation of the BA President in the NB8 Speakers' meeting: 26–28 August in Jūrmala/Rīga (Latvia);
- participation of the BA Presidium in the 17th BSPP: 31 August – 2 September, Visby (Sweden);
- Meeting of the BA Presidium: 11–12 September, Palanga (Lithuania);
- participation in the 4th Council of Europe Forum for Future Democracy: 15–17 October, Madrid (Spain);
- Joint Meeting between the BA – NC Presidiums, participation of the BA Presidium in the NC Session and the NC parliamentary debate on Northern Dimension Policy: 26–30 October (Finland);
- Joint Meeting between the BA – BICC Presidiums, participation of the BA Presidium in the BICC Session: 12–14 December, Luxemburg.

The total amount of funds allocated for meetings of the BA Presidium was **EUR 14,590**, and **EUR 13,468** was actually spent. Expenditures included contract work, transportation and hotel expenses, catering expenses, rent and lease expenses, preparation of information materials, representation and organizational expenses. **Balance: +1,122 EUR.**

3. Meetings of the Committees of the Baltic Assembly

The following meetings of the standing committees of the Baltic Assembly took place between January and December 2008:

- **BA Budget and Audit Committee**

Two meetings of the BA Budget and Audit Committee took place in 2008: on 1 March in Tallinn (Estonia) and 11–12 September in Palanga (Lithuania).

The total amount of funds allocated for Budget and Audit Committee meetings was **EUR 5,500**, and **EUR 5,483** was actually spent. Expenditures included contract work, transportation/hotel/catering expenses, preparation of information materials, representation and organizational expenses. **Balance: + 17 EUR.**

- **BA Economic Affairs, Communications and Informatics Committee**

Joint meeting of the BA Legal Affairs and Security Committee and the BA Economic Affairs, Communications and Informatics Committee with participation of members of the Nordic Council and the Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Council and the Baltic Council of Ministers took place on 28 – 29 February, Tallinn (Estonia).

The total amount of funds allocated for the BA Economic Affairs, Communications and Informatics Committee meetings was **EUR 10,200**, and **EUR 10,200** was actually spent. Expenditures included contract work, transportation/hotel/catering expenses, rent and lease expenses, preparation of information materials, representation and organizational expenses. **Balance: 0 EUR.**

- **BA Environmental Protection and Energy Committee**

Four joint meetings of the Environmental Protection and Energy Committee took place in 2008:

- Study visit of the BA Environmental Protection and Energy Committee: 31 March – 1 April, Copenhagen (Denmark);

- Joint meeting of the BA Environmental Protection and Energy Committee and the NC Natural Resources and Environment Committee: 15–16 April, Stavanger (Norway);

- Joint meeting of the BA Environmental Protection and Energy Committee and the NC Natural Resources and Environment Committee with participation of BICC representatives and members of the BSPC working group on energy and climate change: 22–23 May, Tallinn (Estonia);

- Joint meeting of the BA Environmental Protection and Energy Committee and the NC Natural Resources and Environment Committee: 24–27 June, Minsk/Gomel (Belarus), Kiev (Ukraine);

The total amount of funds allocated for the Environmental Protection and Energy Committee meetings was **EUR 14,290**, and **EUR 14,909** was actually spent. Expenditures included contract work, transportation/hotel/catering expenses, rent and lease expenses, preparation of information materials, representation and organizational expenses. **Balance: - 619 EUR.**

- **BA Education, Science and Culture Committee**

Two meetings of the BA Education, Science and Culture Committee took place in 2008:

- Study visit of the BA Education, Science and Culture Committee: 7–8 February, Helsinki (Finland);

- Joint meeting of the BA Education, Science and Culture Committee and the BA Economic Affairs, Communications and Informatics Committee: 8–9 May, Vilnius (Lithuania).

The total amount of funds allocated for the BA Education, Science and Culture Committee meetings was **EUR 13,200**, and **EUR 11,660** was actually spent. Expenditures included contract work, transportation/hotel/catering expenses, rent and lease expenses, preparation of information materials, representation and organizational expenses. **Balance: + 1,540 EUR.**

- **Rosettes of the BA Medal**

According to the decision of the BA Presidium and the BA Budget and Audit Committee meeting (12.09.08), funds for production of the rosettes for the BA Medal were allocated from this budgetary position. Total: **EUR 2,853.**

- **Ad Hoc Committee and Unplanned Committee Meetings**

In 2008 the following ad hoc committee and unplanned committee meetings took place:

- participation of the BA Environmental Protection and Energy Committee in the meeting of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: 21–22 February, Paris (France);

- Meeting of the BSPP Working Group on Labour Market and Social Welfare: 4–5 May, Helsinki (Finland);

- Meeting of the BSPC Working Group on Labour Market and Social Welfare: 28–29 September, Oslo (Norway);
- Meeting of the BSPC Working Group on Energy and Climate Change: 20–21 October, Copenhagen (Denmark).

The total amount of funds allocated for ad hoc committee and unplanned committee meetings was **EUR 6,200**, and **EUR 6,164** was actually spent. Expenditures included contract work, transportation/hotel/catering expenses, preparation of information materials, representation and organizational expenses. **Balance: + EUR 36.**

The total amount of funds allocated for the BA committee meetings in 2008 was **EUR 65,090**, and **EUR 51,269** was actually spent. **Balance: + EUR 13,821.**

4. International Cooperation

From January to December 2008 the following seminars, conferences and other events with international partners took place:

4.1. Annual Summit of the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council

Annual Summit of the Baltic Assembly and Nordic Council took place on 22–23 January 2009 in Tallinn (Estonia).

The total amount of funds allocated for the BA – NC Annual Summit was **EUR 15,000**. Total expenditures related to these events amounted to **EUR 9,807**, which included contract work, transportation and hotel expenses, catering expenses, preparation of information materials, representation and organizational expenses. **Balance: +5,193 EUR**

4.2. Trilateral Conference of the Baltic Assembly, the Nordic Council and the Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Council

Trilateral Conference of the Baltic Assembly, Nordic Council and Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Council took place on 24–25 April, Rīga (Latvia).

The total amount of funds allocated for the trilateral conference was **EUR 22,100**. Total expenditures related to this event

amounted to **EUR 22,099**, which included contract work, transportation/hotel/catering expenses, rent and lease expenses, preparation of information materials, organizational and representation expenses. **Balance: + EUR 1.**

4.3. Standing Committee of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference and Cooperation with Baltic Sea States organisations

From January to December 2008 the following meetings of the BSPC Standing Committee, the BSPC Expanded Standing Committee, the BSPC Working Groups, the BSPC Secretariat took place:

- Meeting of the BSPC Expanded Standing Committee: 21–23 January, Brussels (Belgium);
- Meeting of the BSPC Working Group on Energy and Climate Change: 4–5 February, Tallinn (Estonia);
- Meeting of the BSPC Secretariat meeting: 18–19 February, Rīga (Latvia);
- Meeting of the BSPC Working Group on Labour Market and Social Welfare: 2–3 March, Berlin (Germany);
- 9th International Environmental Forum “Baltic Sea Day”: 11–13 March, St. Petersburg (Russia);
- Meeting of the Secretariat of the BSPC Working Group on Energy and Climate Change: 6 May, Rīga (Latvia);
- The 3rd Coordination Meeting of the Baltic Sea Region Organisations on Energy and Climate: 2–3 June, Stockholm (Sweden);
- 17th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference: 31 August – 2 September, Visby (Sweden);
- 16th Annual Conference of the Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation: 17–19 September, Kaunas (Lithuania);
- Meeting of the BSPC Standing Committee: 20–21 November, Copenhagen (Denmark).

Total expenses planned for the activities related to participation in the work of the BSPC activities amounted to **EUR 6,500**, and **EUR 6,566** was actually spent. Expense categories included contract work, transportation/hotel/catering expenses, rent and lease expenses, preparation of information materials, organizational and representation expenses. **Balance:**
- EUR 66.

4.4. Cooperation with the Nordic Council

From January to December 2008 the following joint events took place:

– Joint seminar of the BA and the NC with participation of representatives from Belarus: 10 March, Vilnius (Lithuania).

– Nordic – Baltic parliamentary seminar: 21–22 April, Copenhagen (Denmark).

Total expenses planned for the cooperation with the Nordic Council amounted to **EUR 3,680**, and **EUR 2,153** was actually spent. Expense categories included contract work, transportation/hotel/catering expenses, rent and lease expenses, preparation of information materials, organizational and representation expenses. **Balance: + EUR 1,527.**

4.5. Cooperation with the Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Council

Follow up Conference on cooperation of small countries in the European Union took place on 27–28 November in Brussels, Belgium.

The total amount of funds allocated for the cooperation was **EUR 3,280** and **EUR 1,760** was actually spent. Expenditures included contract work, transportation/hotel/catering expenses, preparation of information materials, representation and organizational expenses.

Balance:

+ EUR 1,520.

4.6. Cooperation with partners of the EU Neighbourhood Policy (GUAM, etc.):

From January to December 2008 the following activities with partners of the EU Neighbourhood policy took place:

– Training visit to the South-East European Parliamentary Cooperation Group: 27–30 May, Sofia (Bulgaria).

– Participation in the Celebrations of the 20th Anniversary of the Parliament of Azerbaijan, Meeting with the Members of the GUAM PA: 19–20 June, Baku (Azerbaijan).

– Visit of the GUAM PA delegation: 7–8 December, Tallinn (Estonia).

The total amount of funds allocated for the cooperation was **EUR 2,980** and **EUR**

2,483 was actually spent. Expenditures included contract work, transportation/hotel/catering expenses, preparation of information materials, representation and organizational expenses.

Balance:

+ EUR 497.

The total amount of funds allocated for the international cooperation in 2008 was **EUR 53,540** and **EUR 44,858** was actually spent. **Balance: + EUR 8,682.**

5. Informative Activities and Other Events

5.1. Medals of the Baltic Assembly

The total amount of funds allocated for producing BA Medals in 2008 was **EUR 1,850**, and **EUR 1,824** was actually spent. **Balance: + EUR 26.**

5.2. Homepage of the Baltic Assembly

The total amount of funds allocated in 2008 for upkeep of the www.baltasam.org server, ensuring the functioning of the Baltic BA homepage, updating the information on the homepage and improving its content and design, was **EUR 550**, and **EUR 554** was actually spent. **Balance: - EUR 4.**

5.3. Information materials

In 2008 four information booklets on the BA activities, as well as on co-operation activities with its international partners were published; two of the information booklets were issued repeatedly. Logo of the 20th Anniversary of the Baltic Way was designed. The total amount of funds allocated for BA information materials was **EUR 6,750**, and **EUR 5,978** was actually spent.

Expenditures included translation and editing of the texts, costs of preparing the layouts and printing costs. **Balance: + EUR 772.**

5.4. BA Basketball tournament in 2008

On 6–7 June in Kuressaare (Estonia) BA Basketball tournament was organised. The total funds allocated for this event was **EUR 2,500** and **EUR 2,500** was actually spent. Expenditures included contract work, transportation/hotel/catering expenses, preparation of information materials, and rent of premises, representation and organizational expenses. **Balance: EUR 0.**

The total amount of funds allocated for informative materials and other events in 2008, was EUR 11,650, and EUR 10,856 was actually spent. Balance: + EUR 794.

6. Baltic Assembly Prizes in Literature, the Arts and Science

The Baltic Assembly awards its prizes annually (monetary prize, certificate and statuette). In 2008, meetings of the National Judging Committees were held Tallinn (Estonia), Riga (Latvia) and Vilnius (Lithuania), and one meeting of the BA Joint Judging Committee was held on 13–14 November in Riga (Latvia). Expenses for advertisement for competition for the BA Prizes were covered. The BA Prize awards ceremony took place on 5 December 2008 in Viljandi (Estonia).

The total amount of funds allocated for BA Prizes in 2008 was **EUR 45,882**, and **EUR 45,772** was actually spent. Expenditures included awards for prize winners in literature, the arts and science, expenses for holding Judging Committee meetings and contracts for the concert director, artists and Judging Committee members, producing of certificates and statuettes, transportation, hotel and catering expenses, advertising expenses, and expenses for renting premises. **Balance: + EUR 110.**

7. Baltic Assembly Secretariat

In 2008 planned expenses of the BA Secretariat amounted to **EUR 85,895** and **EUR**

84,012 was actually spent. These expenditures include:

- 1) Salaries and taxes for the staff of the BA Secretariat: **EUR 54,644:**
 - 1.1. Salaries: **EUR 30,774;**
 - 1.2. Taxes: **EUR 23,870;**
- 2) Office equipment and office expenses: **EUR 25,421:**
 - Office rent: **EUR 13,014;**
 - Electricity and heating: **EUR 2,376;**
 - Communication expenses: **EUR 5,463;**
 - Stationery: **EUR 2,073 ;**
 - Information resources: **EUR 1,491;**
 - Services used (Security, Office cleaning, Phytosanitary services, Repair): **EUR 1,004.**
- 3) Representation and other expenses: **EUR 3,947.**

Balance: + EUR 1,883.

8. Unplanned expenses

The Budget for 2008 included **EUR 3,004** (i.e., 1% of the total BA budget) for unplanned expenses, and **EUR 2,917** was actually spent for covering expenses related to changes in currency exchange rates and for commission fees on money transfers. **Balance: + EUR 87.**

DECISION

ON THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY BUDGET FOR 2010

The Baltic Assembly approves its budget for the year 2010 in the amount of EUR 274,140 in accordance with the attached Baltic Assembly budget appropriations. The BA Budget for the year 2010 includes membership fees of all three Baltic countries in the amount of EUR 91,380 for Estonia, EUR 91,380 for Latvia and EUR 91,380 for Lithuania.

According to Article 44, paragraph 4 of the Baltic Assembly Statutes, the expenses necessary for ensuring the activities of the Baltic Assembly shall be shared equally by the parliaments of the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania.

President of
the Baltic Assembly

Dr. Mantas ADOMĖNAS
Republic of Lithuania

Vice President of
the Baltic Assembly

Ērika ZOMMERE
Republic of Latvia

Vice President of
the Baltic Assembly

Trivimi VELLISTE
Republic of Estonia

Vilnius, 28 November 2009

Baltic Assembly

Budget for 2010

(- 17%, compared to the BA Budget 2009)

EXPLANATION

The budget of the Baltic Assembly for 2010 is planned in accordance with the preliminary working plan of the Baltic Assembly for 2010 and on the assumption that the income from membership fees of each national parliament will be **EUR 91,380**. The total budget of the Baltic Assembly for the year 2010 is **EUR 274,140**. Reserve funds from the BA Budgets of 2007, 2008 and 2009 amount **EUR 34,071**.

The budget of the Baltic Assembly for 2010 consists of the following parts:

1. Session of the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council;
2. Meetings of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly;
3. Meetings of the committees of the Baltic Assembly;
4. International cooperation:
 - 4.1. Trilateral Conference of the Baltic Assembly, the Nordic Council and the Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Council;
 - 4.2. International Conference of the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers;
 - 4.3. Annual summit of the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council;
 - 4.4. Standing Committee of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference and cooperation with the Baltic Sea organisations;
 - 4.5. Cooperation with the Nordic Council;
 - 4.6. Cooperation with the Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Council;
 - 4.7. Cooperation with partners of the EU Neighbourhood Policy (GUAM, etc.);
5. Informative activities and other events:
 - 5.1. Baltic Assembly medals;
 - 5.2. Homepage of the Baltic Assembly;
6. Baltic Assembly Prizes for Literature, the Arts and Science;
7. Secretariat of the Baltic Assembly;
8. Unplanned expenses.

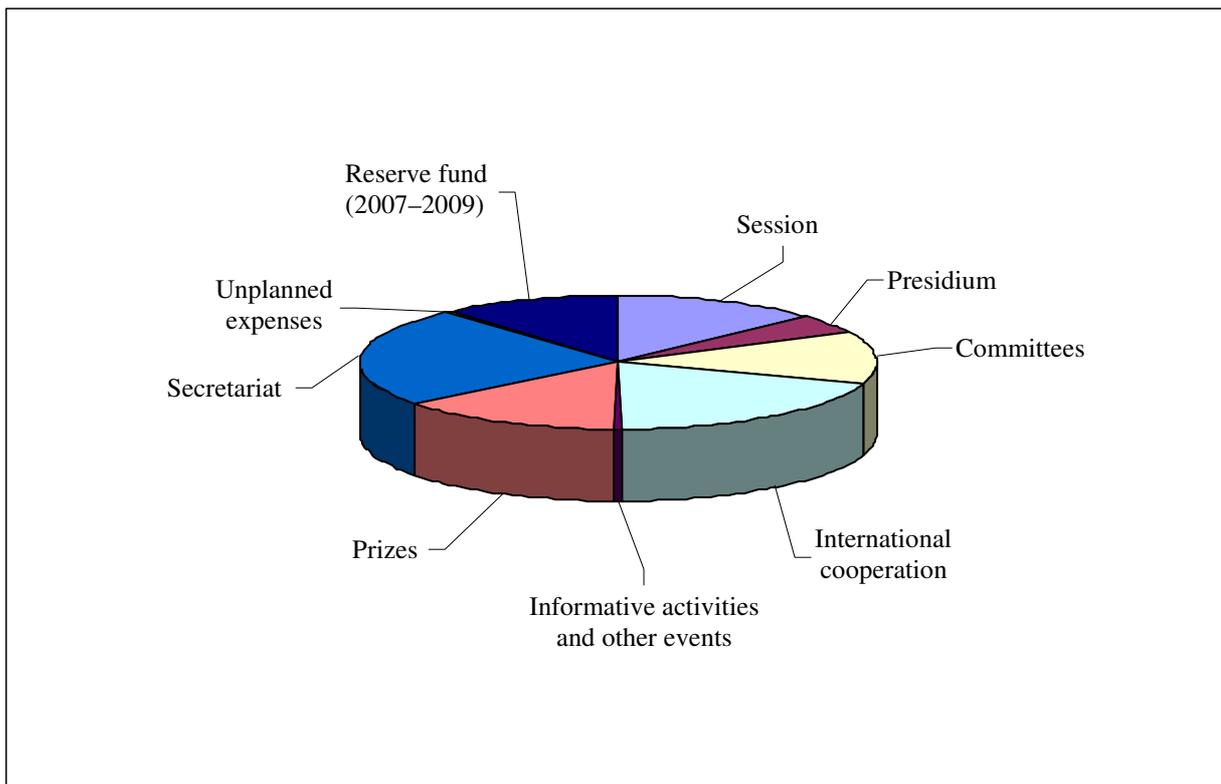
Estimates of the budget of the Baltic Assembly for the above activities are broken down into the following categories:

1. Salaries, contract works, taxes;
2. Transportation and hotel expenses;
3. Catering expenses;

4. Rent and leasing;
5. Information related, organisational and related expenses;
6. Office equipment and related expenses.

BUDGET SUMMARY

Expenses	EUR
Session	40,300
Presidium	13,350
Committees	38,550
International cooperation	61,151
Informative activities and other events	1,753
Prizes	43,628
Secretariat	73,208
Unplanned expenses	2,200
Total	274,140
Reserve funds (2007–2009)	34,071
Total	308,211
Revenues: membership fees	
Estonian parliament	91,380
Latvian parliament	91,380
Lithuanian parliament	91,380
Total	274,140



1. SESSION OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY AND THE BALTIC COUNCIL

The 29th Session of the Baltic Assembly and the 16th Baltic Council will be held on 21–23 October 2010 in Rīga, Latvia.

During the Session of the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council, the following meetings will be held:

- Meeting of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly;
- Meetings of the committees of the Baltic Assembly;
- Meeting with the representatives of the Baltic Council of Ministers;
- Meeting of the Baltic Assembly Presidium with the chairpersons and deputy chairpersons of the Baltic Assembly committees;
- Meetings with the representatives of the Nordic Council and the Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Council;
- Meetings with other international partners of the Baltic Assembly;
- Meetings of the party groups of the Baltic Assembly.

Total planned expenses for the Session of the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council amount to EUR 40,300. The following expense categories are budgeted for the Session of the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council:

1. Salaries, contract work (including taxes) include expenses for the translation of materials, interpretation at meetings, editorial services and other technical services.

Total: EUR 9,950;

2. Transportation and hotel expenses include transportation and accommodation costs of invited guests and experts. Total: EUR 2,900;

3. Catering expenses include coffee breaks, lunches, dinners, and receptions. Total: EUR 18,000;

4. Rent and leasing include rental of premises and leasing of equipment necessary for the work of the Session. Total: EUR 4,500;

5. Information-related, organizational and related expenses include copying of materials, purchase of stationery (folders, pens, etc.) for each participant, production of badges, table cards and other identification marks. Total: EUR 4,950.

2. MEETINGS OF THE PRESIDIUM OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY

It is expected that seven regular meetings of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly will take place:

Meeting of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly

Time and venue: **4–5 February**, Rīga (Latvia);

• **Meeting of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly, joint meeting of the BA – BICC Presidiums, joint meeting of the BA – BICC – NC Presidiums** (in connection with the BICC Session)

Time and venue: **11–12 March**, Brussels (Belgium);

• **Meeting of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly, joint meeting of the BA – BICC Presidiums** (in connection with the BICC Session)

Time and venue: **10–11 June**, Brussels (Belgium);

- **Meeting of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly, joint meeting of the BA – NC Presidiums** (in connection with the 19th BSPP)

Time and venue: **29–31 August**, Marienhamn (Åland Islands);

- **Meeting of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly**

Time and venue: **9–10 September**, Rīga (Latvia);

- **Meeting of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly, joint meeting of the BA – NC Presidiums** (in connection with the 62nd NC Session)

Time and venue: **2–4 November**, Reykjavik (Iceland);

- **Meeting of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly, joint meeting of the BA – BICC Presidiums** (in connection with the BICC Session)

Time and venue: **9–10 December**, Brussels (Belgium);

- **One unplanned meeting of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly.**

Total expenses planned for the meetings of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly (including expenses for one unplanned meeting) amount to **EUR 13,350**. The following expense categories are budgeted for the meetings of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly:

1. Salaries, contract work (including taxes) **include expenses for the translation of materials, interpretation at meetings, editorial services and other technical services.**

Total: EUR 2,250;

2. Transportation and hotel expenses **include transportation and accommodation costs of invited guests and experts.** **Total:** EUR 1,150;

3. Catering expenses **include coffee breaks, lunches, dinners.** **Total:** EUR 6,960;

4. Rent and leasing **include rental of premises and leasing of equipment necessary for the work of the Presidium meetings.** **Total:** EUR 1,010;

5. Information-related, organizational and related expenses **include copying of materials, purchase of stationery (folders, pens, etc.) for each participant, production of badges, table cards and other identification marks.** **Total:** EUR 1,980.

3. MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEES OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY

FIVE MEETINGS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES WITH PARTICIPATION OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE NORDIC COUNCIL AND THE BENELUX INTERPARLIAMENTARY CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL AND THE GUAM PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY, TWO MEETINGS OF THE BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE ARE PLANNED FOR 2010.

- **Meetings of the BA Budget and Audit Committee**

Time and venue:

4–5 February, Rīga (Latvia);

9–10 September, Rīga (Latvia).

Expense categories: contract work; accommodation expenses; rental of equipment; information-related expenses, organizational and related expenses. Total for both meetings is: **EUR 3,350.**

- **Joint meeting of the BA Economic Affairs, Communications and Informatics Committee and the BA Environmental and Energy Committee**

Time and venue:

18–19 March, place – tbc., with participation of representatives from the NC and the BICC.

Expense categories: contract work; rental of premises and technical equipment; transportation and hotel expenses for experts; catering expenses; information-related expenses, organizational and related expenses. Total for the meeting is: **EUR 7,040.**

- **Meeting of the BA Legal Affairs and Security Committee**

Time and venue:

6–7 May, place – Latvia, with participation of representatives from the NC and the BICC.

Expense categories: contract work; rental of premises and technical equipment; transportation and hotel expenses for experts; catering expenses; information-related expenses, organizational and related expenses. Total for the meeting is: **EUR 7,040.**

- **Meeting of the BA Environmental Protection and Energy Committee**

Time and venue:

3–4 June, place – tbc., with participation of representatives from the NC and the BICC.

Expense categories: contract work; rental of premises and technical equipment; transportation and hotel expenses for experts; catering expenses; information-related expenses, organizational and related expenses. Total for the meeting is: **EUR 7,040.**

- **Meeting of the BA Education, Science and Culture Committee**

Time and venue:

22–23 April, Lithuania, with participation of representatives from the NC and the BICC.

Expense categories: contract work; rental of premises and technical equipment; transportation and hotel expenses for experts; catering expenses; information-related expenses, organizational and related expenses. Total for the meeting is: **EUR 7,040.**

- **Meeting of the BA Social Affairs Committee**

Time and venue:

25–26 February, Estonia, with participation of representatives from the NC and the BICC.

Expense categories: contract work; rental of premises and technical equipment; transportation and hotel expenses for experts; catering expenses; information-related expenses, organizational and related expenses. Total for the meeting is: **EUR 7,040.**

Total expenses planned for the Baltic Assembly committee meetings amount to EUR 38,550. The following expense categories are budgeted for the BA committee meetings:

1. Salaries, contract work (including taxes) **include expenses for the translation of materials, interpretation at meetings, editorial services and other necessary services.**
Total: EUR 13,450.

2. Transportation and hotel expenses **include transportation and hotel costs of invited guests and experts.** **Total:** EUR 7,700.

3. Catering expenses **include coffee breaks, lunches, dinners, and receptions.**
Total: EUR 15,750.

4. Information-related, organizational and related expenses **include copying of materials, purchase of stationery (folders, pens, etc.) for each participant, production of badges, table cards and other identification marks.** **Total:** EUR 1,650.

4. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

4.1. Trilateral Conference of the Baltic Assembly, the Nordic Council and the Benelux Parliamentary Consultative Council

Trilateral Conference of the Baltic Assembly, the Nordic Council and the Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Council will be held on 29–30 April, venue – tbc.

Total expenses planned for the trilateral conference amount to EUR 8,670. The following expense categories are budgeted for the trilateral conference

1. Salaries, contract work (including taxes) **include expenses for the translation of materials, interpretation at meetings, editorial services and other technical services.**
Total: EUR 2,900.

2. Travel and hotel expenses **include travel and hotel costs for invited guests and experts.** EUR 1,540.

3. Catering expenses **include coffee breaks, lunches, dinners, and receptions.**
Total: EUR 3,250.

4. Information-related, organizational and related expenses **include copying of materials, purchase of stationery (folders, pens, etc.) for each participant, production of badges, table cards and other identification marks..** **Total:** EUR 980.

4.2. International Conference of the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers

International Conference of the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers will be held in May in Rīga, Latvia.

Total expenses planned for the trilateral conference amount to EUR 8,890. The following expense categories are budgeted for the trilateral conference

1. Salaries, contract work (including taxes) include expenses for the translation of materials, interpretation at meetings, editorial services and other technical services.

Total: EUR 2,900.

2. Travel and hotel expenses include travel and hotel costs for invited guests and experts. EUR 1,540.

3. Catering expenses include coffee breaks, lunches, dinners, and receptions.
Total: EUR 3,250.

4. Information-related, organizational and related expenses include copying of materials, purchase of stationery (folders, pens, etc.) for each participant, production of badges, table cards and other identification marks. Total: EUR 1,200.

4.3. Annual Summit of the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council

The fourth annual summit of the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council will take place on 7–8 December 2010 in Helsinki, Finland.

Total expenses planned for the BA–NC Annual Summit amount to EUR 8,890. The following expense categories are budgeted for the Annual Summit:

1. Salaries, contract work, premiums and taxes include expenses for the translation of materials, interpretation at meetings, editorial services and other necessary services. Total: EUR 2,900.

2. Travel and hotel expenses include travel and hotel costs for invited guests and experts. EUR 1,540.

3. Catering expenses include coffee breaks, lunches, dinners, and receptions.
Total: EUR 3,250.

4. Information-related, organizational and related expenses include copying of materials, purchase of stationery (folders, pens, etc.) for each participant, production of badges, table cards and other identification marks. Total: EUR 1,200.

4.4. Standing Committee of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference
and cooperation with the Baltic Sea organisations

Total expenses planned for the activities related to the work of the BSPC Standing Committee, the BSPC Enlarged Standing Committee, work of the BSPC working group on maritime policy, transport and infrastructure and the BSPC working group on civil security amount to EUR 8,156 which includes the following expense categories: contract work; catering expenses; transportation and hotel expenses; rent and leasing; information-related, organizational and related expenses.

4.5. Cooperation with the Nordic Council

Expenses for meetings of the BA–NC Presidiums and committees have been planned and amount to EUR 8,945 which includes the following expense categories: contract work; catering expenses; rent and leasing; transportation and hotel expenses for experts; information-related, organizational and related expenses.

Time and venue:

- 26–27 January, Copenhagen (Denmark);
- 13–14 April, Norway;
- 26–27 June, place – tbc;
- 21–22 September, Sweden;
- 7–8 December, Finland.

4.6. Cooperation with the Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Council

Expenses for seminars, roundtable discussions and meetings of the BA – BICC Presidiums and committees have been planned and amount to EUR 8,725 which includes the following expense categories: contract work; catering expenses; rent and leasing; transportation and hotel expenses for experts; information-related, organizational and related expenses.

Time and venue:

- Tbc.

4.7. Cooperation with partners of the EU Neighbourhood Policy (GUAM, etc.)

Expenses for seminars, roundtable discussions and meetings of the BA – GUAM PA Presidiums and committees have been planned and amount to EUR 8,875 which includes the following expense categories: contract work; transportation and hotel expenses for experts; catering expenses; rent and leasing; information-related, organizational and related expenses.

Time and venue:

- Tbc.

5. INFORMATIVE ACTIVITIES AND OTHER EVENTS

5.1. Baltic Assembly medals

It is planned to award Baltic Assembly medals for upholding the unity and cooperation of the Baltic States. Total: EUR 828.

5.2. Homepage of the Baltic Assembly

It is planned to maintain and update the homepage of the Baltic Assembly (incl. the programme). Expenses for maintaining the BA homepage include the following categories: ensuring its functionality and updating its information. Total expenses planned for the homepage of the Baltic Assembly amount to EUR 925.

6. BALTIC ASSEMBLY PRIZES FOR LITERATURE, THE ARTS AND SCIENCE

The Baltic Assembly awards its prizes annually. It is planned to hold the following meetings of the judging committees:

- meetings of the national judging committees (6 one-day meetings);
- meeting of the Joint Judging Committee on **23–24 September** in Rīga (Latvia), as well as the BA Prizes Awarding Ceremony.

Total expenses planned for the Baltic Assembly Prizes for Literature, the Arts and Science amount to **EUR 43,628**. The following expense categories are budgeted for the Baltic Assembly Prizes for Literature, the Arts and Science:

1. Salaries and contract work (tax included) include expenses for contract work for jury members, translators, as well as a concert director and invited artists. Total: EUR 7,200.

2. Transportation and hotel expenses **include transportation and hotel costs for members of the Joint Judging Committee and Baltic Assembly Prize winners. Total: EUR 3,628.**

3. Catering expenses **include expenses for coffee breaks and meals for Joint Judging Committee members and reception costs. Total: EUR 5,500**

4. Rent and leasing **include rental of premises and leasing of equipment for the BA Prize Awards Ceremony. Total: EUR 2,300.**

5. Information-related, organizational and related expenses **include copying of materials, purchase of stationery (folders, pens, etc.) for each participant, production of badges, table cards and other identification marks, other organisational expenses as well as unplanned expenses. Total: EUR 4,000.**

6. BA Prizes. **The sum allocated for prize-winners is EUR 15,000. This category also includes the cost of production of statuettes and certificates. Total: EUR 22,200.**

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7. SECRETARIAT OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY

THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF THE EXPENSES FOR THE SECRETARIAT OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY IS **EUR 73,208**. THE FOLLOWING EXPENSE CATEGORIES ARE BUDGETED FOR THE SECRETARIAT OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY:

1. Salaries and taxes for the staff of the BA Secretariat

It is planned to allocate **EUR 52,108** for salaries of the BA Secretariat staff (including the employer's state social insurance payment in amount of 9%, social insurance payment in amount of 24.09% and 25% personal income tax payments).

2. Office equipment and office expenses

The total sum planned for office equipment and office expenses is **EUR 21,100**. The following expense categories are included:

2.1. Office rent and utilities: EUR 9,271;

2.2. Electricity and heating: EUR 2,434;

2.3. Communication expenses (Internet, telephone, fax): EUR 3,734;

2.4. Stationery: EUR 3,396;

2.5. Information resources, programmes: EUR 465;

2.6. Services used (sanitation and repairs) and unplanned expenses: EUR 1,800.

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8. UNPLANNED EXPENSES

The total amount of unplanned expenses (changes in the currency rate, etc.) is **EUR 2,200**, i.e., 0.8% of the Baltic Assembly budget for 2010.