

RESOLUTION
of the 42nd Session of the Baltic Assembly

The Baltic Assembly,

having convened for its 42nd Session on 23–24 November 2023 in Tallinn, the Republic of Estonia,

having discussed the results of the Estonian Presidency in the Baltic Assembly, joining forces towards a region that is more resilient to economic and energy market pressures as well as effective and coherent regional civil defence through close consultations and coordination of the Baltic States,

emphasizing the severe consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine that has grossly violated the universally recognised norms and principles of international law, and **acknowledging** the insufficient effectiveness of the existing international mechanisms and actions to ensure the rapid victory of Ukraine thus protecting Ukrainians from even more suffering and destruction,

being aware of the expected attempts to draw attention away from the unprovoked and unjustified Russian invasion of Ukraine and other hostile practices of this aggressor state which might arise due to the duration of the war and other alarming developments in the world, and **underlining** the increased need for the Baltic States to remain united, strong and proactive in supporting Ukraine, exposing true nature of Russia, and addressing joint challenges for strengthening of the region,

calling attention to the need for democratic and like-minded countries to accept that Russia in the foreseeable future will not change, diplomacy with this authoritarian regime will not work and that sooner or later everyone will feel the consequences of Russia's activities in their backyard, and **insisting** that the international community puts their heads and resources together to help Ukraine defeat Russia based on the President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's Peace Formula that aims to ensure lasting security of Ukraine and the region,

reinforcing the calls for reforming the United Nations Security Council to allow effective intervention in conflicts and to change the situation where the aggressor state can dictate decision-making,

strongly supporting Ukraine and other committed Eastern Partnership countries in their aspirations towards the European Union, and **committing** to providing expertise and assistance in achieving the goal of membership in the European Union,

welcoming all the activities of the Baltic States in strengthening national and regional security as well as constant efforts to maintain close and regular relations with like-minded countries that are interested in peace, stability and development of their countries and region, and **stressing** the vital role of the European Union in preserving peace, strengthening international security and improving the resilience of the region,

reiterating the need to strengthen and broaden the defence cooperation of the Baltic States and with the partners in the Nordic and Benelux countries to withstand the security threats of conventional, cyber and hybrid warfare, and **emphasising** the significant role of the allied deterrence and defence posture in the region, especially the importance and necessity for a permanent presence of the US,

reiterating the pivotal role of the Baltic States as free and democratic countries in supporting efforts and aspirations for freedom, democracy, the rule of law and civil society, and the plurality of

information, considering, in particular, the situation in Ukraine, but also in Belarus, and **reaffirming** the readiness to continue work towards positive changes in the entire Eastern Partnership region,

appreciating joint activities and close cooperation of the Baltic States during challenging and uncertain times, and **welcoming** the intensive and fruitful coordination between the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers aimed at strengthening the security and resilience of the region,

recognizing the existing cooperation of the Baltic States within the Three Seas Initiative, and **highlighting** the need for a well-established format for cooperation within the framework to strengthen the Baltic position within the Three Seas Initiative,

endorsing the constructive cooperation between the Baltic States in the implementation of the Rail Baltica project that brings noticeable progress, including in enabling the military mobility potential of the project, and **evoking** the intergovernmental agreement to complete the project in its entirety as a railway linking and integrating the Baltic States into the European rail network,

welcoming the progress achieved with the renewed Partnership Agreement between the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Estonia, and the Ministry of Health of Lithuania on Joint Procurements of Medicinal Products and Medical Devices and Lending of Medicinal Products and Medical Devices Procurable Centrally signed in 2022, and **committing** to continue efforts to ensure a systemic approach for cross-border joint procurements in the health sector of the Baltic States,

continuing to support the joint initiative of the CERN Baltic Group and CERN on Advanced Particle Therapy Center as a possible integrated flagship project for the Baltic States and **emphasizing** the need for a full-scale feasibility study of the project,

welcoming the celebration of the 35th Anniversary of the Baltic Way – the day when millions of hands were held together across hundreds of kilometres in a peaceful show of Baltic solidarity – on 23 August 2024, and **underlining** the importance of celebrating the Anniversary in unity, highlighting the common cultural and historical heritage, joint values and shared interests of the Baltic States,

endorsing the Appeal of the Estonian Broken Cornflower Society, the Lithuanian Union of Political Prisoners and Deportees and the Latvian Association of the Politically Repressed Persons to the Baltic Assembly signed on 29 June 2023 that urges to recognise March 25 as the International Day against the deportation of nationalities and **urging** the Baltic States to propose the establishment of such an International Day to the United Nations General Assembly,

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

regarding the security and defence cooperation of the Baltic States:

- to develop a clear roadmap for further steps towards the joint operational area of the Baltic States;
- to develop the Baltic model of comprehensive defence via enhancing and synchronizing comprehensive national defence thinking of the Baltic States;
- to share knowledge and best practices regarding comprehensive national defence among the Baltic States;
- considering the membership of NATO and bordering with Russia and Belarus, to extend the cooperation of the Baltic States with Finland on issues related to comprehensive defence;
- to start negotiations on the harmonisation of existing national defence legislation of the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Lithuania, and the Republic of Latvia and their future updates;

- to create a joint civil defence mechanism for the Baltic States that includes practical planning and cross-border cooperation among the municipalities in the Baltic States;
- taking into account the regional vulnerabilities and specificities, to agree on a common response to hybrid threats in the Baltic States;
- to evaluate the need to introduce a joint digital battlefield management system for the Baltic States;
- to strengthen cooperation between the Baltic States in the context of security, investment, and growth on the EU's Eastern external border, and draw the attention of EU partners to the necessity of drafting a common EU-level strategy and support instruments for the development of the EU's Eastern border area;
- to continue investing substantially in strengthening the medium-range and developing long-range air defence capabilities as well as in improving coastal and maritime defence capabilities of the Baltic States;
- to find a common solution of the Baltic States for receiving and treating soldiers wounded on the battlefield;
- to support initiatives for strengthening the single airspace corridor from Poland to Finland and solving military mobility challenges in the Suwalki Gap;
- to reach the potential of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence and to attract funding for expanding the cyber defence exercises in the Baltic States, thus improving the cyber defence capacity in the region;
- to improve cross-border coordination between the Baltic States to effectively enhance cooperation in cyber security and to speed up the evaluation process of the possible joint Baltic project, connecting the existing state intranets into a joint secure connection throughout the territory of the Baltic States;
- to intensify the work on establishing a common and well-functioning system for joint military procurements along with conducting further analysis on the possible acquirement of a common multiple-launch rocket system;
- to continue developing military mobility infrastructure and procedures and raise awareness among our European and transatlantic partners regarding the Baltic military mobility and military mobility infrastructure capabilities, also taking into consideration the strategic importance of the Rail Baltica project;
- to continue strengthening the Command and Control structure in the Baltic region;
- to identify gaps and to direct human and financial resources to areas lacking them to ensure effective responses to sophisticated crime in the Baltic States;
- to start harmonizing the anti-money laundering regulations in the Baltic States;

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

- to start work on establishing the national plans of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania for wartime civil defence through close consultations and coordination between the Baltic States;
- to begin consultations for agreeing on common civil defence priorities of the Baltic States;
- to improve the procedures of the Baltic States regarding providing humanitarian aid and also develop a solution for accepting humanitarian aid in the region;
- to discuss a need for a long-term strategy for the Baltic States to ensure coordinated actions in addressing various crises;
- to set up a working group of the Baltic States to elaborate on the possibility of unifying capabilities and competencies of the national security institutions regarding information and communications technology innovations;
- to continue strengthening the capacity of the police services of the Baltic States in fighting cybercrime;

- to eliminate gaps regarding civil protection and disaster preparedness in cross-border cooperation of the Baltic States;
- to conclude a health emergency treaty between the Baltic States aiming to improve cooperation in case of health-related emergencies;

regarding external border control and management:

- to agree on a single Baltic position and to join efforts in ensuring the best possible result for the Baltic States regarding the amendments to the Schengen Borders Code;
- to agree on a single Baltic position and to join efforts in ensuring the best possible result for the Baltic States regarding the reform of the migration and asylum rules of the European Union;
- to harmonize the border systems and decision-making procedures of the Baltic States to ensure an effective response to future cross-border challenges;
- to prepare a plan for the Baltic States for effective implementation of border checks during crisis situations and implement the plan, including finding ways of solving such issues as inadequate road infrastructure in the border regions and insufficient human resources;
- to implement common standards for improving situational awareness and increasing response capability at the external borders of the Baltic States based on the requirements of the European Border Surveillance System;

regarding supporting Ukrainian refugees arriving in the Baltic States:

- to put in place a coordinated, well-functioning and flexible system for monitoring the needs and activities of Ukrainian refugees in the Baltic States and Poland;
- to harmonize the solutions regarding social benefits and pensions for Ukrainian refugees and Ukrainians living in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania;
- to find a joint approach to ensuring psychosocial support services for the Ukrainian refugees arriving in the Baltic States;
- to create key points of contact between institutions, local citizens and Ukrainian refugees in the Baltic States;
- to continue regular exchange of best practices and experience between the competent authorities responsible for teaching and learning support for the Ukrainian refugees and Ukrainians living in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania;
- to increase the cultural engagement of the Ukrainian citizens in the Baltic States by joining the efforts in promoting and defending their interests in national and EU-level institutions, including lobbying for a special action for Ukraine under the Creative Europe programme;

regarding the information area and media cooperation of the Baltic States:

- to develop a Baltic plan of action aiming to introduce an effective EU-level mechanism for the protection of the European information area;
- to jointly elaborate a proposal about introducing effective tools for countering disinformation and propaganda in the European Media Freedom Act;
- to create a Baltic database for materials about media literacy to facilitate the work of teachers and students in the region;
- to harmonize the methodology of the public opinion polls to regularly measure and compare the social resilience and social temperature in the Baltic States;
- to jointly agree on a white paper about the strategic goals to fight disinformation and increase the social resilience of the Baltic States through increasing media competencies and media literacy in the Baltic region;
- to strengthen the existing programmes and share best practices for improving media literacy in the Baltic States;

- to jointly agree on a plan of action for improving the quality and diversity of news about events and developments in the Baltic region in the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and English languages with an emphasis on strengthening public media broadcasters;

regarding cooperation in protecting the environment and biodiversity in the Baltic States:

- to create a format for ensuring regular cooperation of the Baltic States in the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;
- to jointly develop proposals on shifting the implementation of the green transition from a mostly industry-centred approach to a more human-centred approach in the Baltic States;
- considering the vital role of education in encouraging people to change their attitudes and behaviour, to start discussions on incorporating knowledge on climate change, ecology and biosphere into all national curriculums of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania;
- to jointly work on a comprehensive plan for responsible and sustainable peatland conservation, restoration and management in the Baltic States;
- to intensify cooperation of the Baltic States to reverse the decline in bird species in the region;
- to share best practices in preventing and minimising the effects of invasive alien species in the Baltic States;

regarding cooperation in the health care sector:

- to create a joint working group for addressing healthcare workforce shortage in the Baltic States to exchange experience and coordinate activities;
- to start negotiations about a joint programme to improve health literacy in the Baltic States;
- considering the successful example of the Beneluxa Initiative, to examine possible scenarios for ensuring sustainable access to innovative medicine at an affordable cost in the Baltic States;
- to plan and develop a Baltic cancer registry for collecting and exchanging data about cancer patients in the region;
- to create a Baltic roadmap for improving mental health in the region that includes embracing a human rights-based approach, prioritizing effective psychosocial interventions and stopping investments in segregated psychiatric institutions;
- to implement a full-scale feasibility study of the joint initiative of the CERN Baltic Group and CERN on Advanced Particle Therapy Center for the Baltic States;
- to engage the corresponding ministries, national agencies and relevant stakeholders and to jointly apply for co-financing from the European Union for implementing the joint initiative of the CERN Baltic Group and CERN on Advanced Particle Therapy Center for the Baltic States;
- to jointly take stock of the horizon scanning of new medications and to create a joint waiting list of innovative medications for the Baltic States to negotiate joint procurements;
- to start discussions about the prospects for joint procurements of expensive medications in formats such as the Baltic-Nordic region and the Baltic States together with Poland and Ukraine;
- to identify clinical research projects that would benefit from cooperation and start discussions about the joint participation of the Baltic States;
- to start discussions about a joint system for addressing medicine shortages in the Baltic States efficiently and timely;
- to eliminate obstacles for the Baltic States to ensure the compatibility of e-Health systems and proper health data exchange;

regarding cooperation in the social sector:

- to intensify cooperation in the EU initiative ALMA through joint projects aimed at helping young people finding their way to the job market of the Baltic States;
- to discuss possible cooperation areas of the Baltic States to mitigate the impacts of current crises on poor and vulnerable groups;

- to start discussions about addressing common challenges of the social protection systems of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, such as ageing society, shrinking workforce, stress on the pension systems, systemic challenges, external shocks and crises;

regarding the economic cooperation of the Baltic States:

- to agree on a joint position of the Baltic States regarding the reform of the European Union's electricity market design that prioritizes regional interests;
- to jointly impress the Members States to introduce a unified approach to sanctioned assets in the European Union;
- to agree on joint priorities or specialisation of the Baltic States regarding the strategic economic sectors for encouraging smart investments in the region;
- to start elaborating a common strategy to motivate the Baltic companies to invest in foreign markets, considering the necessity to attract foreign human capital for Baltic companies without significantly increasing immigration to the Baltic States;
- to put in place a common platform for sharing experiences between the Baltic States on how to captivate companies and attract private investments for industrial transformation;
- to jointly develop alternative market-based funding sources to foster immediate recovery of the economies of the Baltic States;
- to create a format for the cooperation of the Baltic States within the Three Seas Initiative, improving energy, transport and digital connectivity of the region as well as contributing to Ukraine's recovery;
- to continue highlighting the importance of EU funding in the completion of the large-scale strategic projects of the Baltic States, such as Rail Baltica, and the synchronization of the electricity networks with the continental European network;
- learning from the successful cooperation of the Nordic states in the tourism sector, to elaborate a plan for deepening the cooperation of the tourism sectors of the Baltic States;
- to discuss possible joint measures to address long-term labour market challenges (such as skills mismatch and structural unemployment) in the Baltic States;
- based on the positive experience and results of the Baltic Innovation Fund I and II, to perform an analysis and start negotiations about the development of the Baltic Innovation Fund III and widening the scope of the national partners;

regarding the digital cooperation of the Baltic States:

- to introduce a joint approach for ensuring a safer and more accountable digital environment in the Baltic States;
- to start discussions about harmonizing legal framework in the digital sector of the Baltic States;
- to significantly accelerate removing any legal and/or organisational obstacles to the interoperability of the digital signatures of the Baltic States;
- to facilitate moving towards a digital single market of the Baltic States by identifying and eliminating legislative and administrative obstacles;
- to agree on a common regional approach and overcome obstacles in using Real-Time Economy;
- to improve the mechanisms for regular exchange of experience and knowledge about digital transformation in the Baltic States;
- to agree on 3B common data standards, lists of data to exchange and ensure digital data exchange and interoperability via already existing different platforms or seeking a common platform;
- in order to reduce the administrative burden on citizens and businesses, to continue improving the Single Digital Gateway areas most relevant in a wider 3B and Baltic-Nordic context to ensure cross-border services, data exchange and realisation of the Once Only Principle;
- to start negotiations about developing a joint Baltic network of business incubators of the European Space Agency;

regarding cooperation in clean energy transition and development of renewable energy projects:

- to conduct a study supported by the governments of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania on energy supply options and low-carbon pathways in the Baltic States;
- to jointly conduct a renewable energy systematic and transition pathway analysis of the Baltic States;
- to prepare a plan and financial estimate for the implementation of the actions laid out in the Baltic-Nordic Roadmap for Cooperation on Clean Energy Technologies;
- to exchange experience in collecting data on the carbon content of products from third countries to facilitate the implementation of the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism;
- to jointly assess the environmental tax systems in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania for a more effective and better-coordinated implementation of any changes;
- while carrying out reforms in the national environmental tax systems, to coordinate planned activities between the Baltic States and seriously consider the regional implications of the changes;
- to create a financially sustainable recycling solution for collected textiles in the Baltic States;
- to introduce a harmonized approach of the Baltic States for reusing and repairing products and using them again in the regional market;
- to combine the national plans and other policy documents regarding hydrogen in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into a single Baltic hydrogen strategy;
- to coordinate activities of the Baltic States regarding the elimination of practices that allow the region to be used as a dumping ground for Nordic and Western waste;
- to intensify the cooperation of the Baltic States within the Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL) of the European Union;
- to intensify the cooperation of the Baltic States in the development of wind energy production by developing joint offshore and onshore wind park projects, including regarding the Latvian-Estonian offshore wind park project ELWIND;
- to find a solution for building energy system models for the Baltic-Nordic region that will serve as important sources of information for joint policy-making;
- to implement a study about the geological structures suitable for the storage of CO₂, hydrogen and other energy carriers;
- considering the analysis of the possibilities of establishing a joint waste packaging system in the Baltic States, to agree on a solution for for packaging returns in the Baltic States;
- to intensify discussions on a regional approach of the Baltic States regarding the development of renewable energy projects;

regarding the common electricity and gas market of the Baltic States:

- to start discussions about a common Baltic strategy for secure, competitive, and sustainable energy in the region;
- to share the best practices regarding short-term measures to shield households, businesses, and the economy from energy price shocks in the Baltic States;
- to agree on the role of nuclear energy as a potential energy source in the future energy production of the Baltic States and return to the Baltic Assembly with a common vision on nuclear energy opportunities;
- to continue discussions about a common approach to cyber security in the energy sector of the Baltic States that could include such joint activities as educating companies and strategic infrastructure holders in the region;

- to join the forces of the Baltic States in the implementation of the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism aiming to improve the competitiveness of Baltic importers and ensure a just transition while eliminating energy poverty;
- to continue the coordination of activities towards a common regional electricity and gas market of the Baltic States;
- to jointly ensure maximum resilience of the electricity system of the Baltic States, needed to deter any unwelcomed activities and threats regarding the intention to disconnect the region from the IPS/UPS power system and inform the Baltic Assembly about the progress of disconnecting from the IPS/UPS power system once every six months;
- to elaborate a joint plan on capacity building for the protection of the Baltic electricity market after 2025;
- to continue the technical implementation of the synchronization of the Baltic electricity networks with the continental European network;
- to elaborate a joint plan to facilitate the transition in the gas sector, including the repurposing of the existing gas infrastructure and understanding the future role of hydrogen in the current gas infrastructure;

regarding the implementation of the Rail Baltica project:

- taking stock of the Rail Baltica project, to create an exclusive digital backbone of a fiber network that connects all of the military and civil defence infrastructure in the Baltic States;
- to continue the implementation of the Rail Baltica project by ensuring timely implementation, efficient infrastructure management and preventing an increase in the total expenditure of the project;

regarding cooperation in education, science and research:

- following the successful experience of the Baltic Culture Fund, to start negotiations about establishing a Baltic Science Fund to finance and facilitate regional research cooperation;
- to reestablish the previously existing cooperation of the ministries of education of the Baltic States within the Baltic Alliance for Apprenticeships to encourage regional approaches in the implementation of vocational education and training;
- to coordinate and implement joint actions aimed at improving the mobility of students and professionals of vocational and technical education within the Baltic region;
- to analyse the range of vocational and technical education programmes and modules available in the region and identify areas benefiting from joint activities of the Baltic States (e.g. modern engineering);
- to prepare a vocational and technical education development plan for the Baltic States to meet the needs of the labour market with a particular focus on ensuring the skills required for the implementation of regional large-scale infrastructure projects such as Rail Baltica and others;
- using the instruments and cooperation formats available (such as *Horizon Dashboard*, Baltic Research Cooperation Program, Baltic Science Network, among others), to prepare a map of the existing Baltic research cooperation in order to examine the results of research cooperation and overcome the gaps;
- to create a mechanism for an efficient use of the research equipment acquired in the Baltic States;
- to create a format for regular exchange of information in vocational and secondary education between the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Estonia, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania;
- considering the international nature of the challenges in the STEM field, to coordinate the implementation of policy initiatives to address the shortage of graduates, skills mismatch, and gender imbalance in the STEM field;

- to continue discussions about a joint Baltic space strategy, defining areas and actions of cooperation in the long term;
- to encourage the cooperation of the Baltic States within the European Space Agency and its projects;
- to enable the potential provided by the cooperation with CERN for the development of science, research and technology in the Baltic States and allocate corresponding financial support within the State budgets which should be equal on the national level to the amount of membership fee paid to CERN;
- to continue efforts to establish the CERN Internship Programme for students in the Baltic States;

regarding cultural cooperation of the Baltic States:

- to explore participation trends of the Baltic population in regional cultural activities and subsequently elaborate joint actions to foster cultural mobility within the region;
- to allocate additional funding for the Baltic Culture Fund (BCF) in 2025 in the amount of 10% of the 2024 funding to ensure the continuity and quality of the cultural projects funded by the BCF, demonstrating the unity, solidarity and close cultural ties between the Baltic States;
- to create a cultural leadership programme in the Baltic States that provides an opportunity for artists and creative professionals in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to meet with each other and contribute to the delivery of new joint projects;
- to reevaluate the existing practice of the Baltic Culture Fund of granting funding and to provide an opportunity to fund projects implemented in the Baltic States;
- considering the impact of climate change, underlining the importance of a joint approach and emphasising the need to promote environmental awareness-raising among the public, to agree on a set of principles and requirements to be applied when organising joint bilateral or trilateral cultural events of the Baltic States in order to minimise the environmental footprint;
- based on the approach of the Nordic countries, to start work on an international marketing and communication strategy for the Baltic region.

Tallinn, 24 November 2023