

Baltic Sea Labour Forum

A new agenda for a fair, competitive and sustainable Baltic Sea Region



1st Statement of the Enlarged Steering Committee

20 April 2012, Hamburg

Transnational Social Dialogue and regional co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region have reached a permanent status under the auspices of the Baltic Sea Labour Forum (BSLF). After the successful conclusion of the EU-Baltic-Sea-Strategy-Flagship-Project BSLN (Baltic Sea Labour Network) 21 organisations to date have signed a joint agreement for creating a tripartite Forum for Social Dialogue in the Baltic Sea Region and for co-operating cross-border in order to create a fair and competitive Baltic Sea Region.

The Baltic Sea Labour Forum will assemble tripartite representatives from employers and trade union associations from the countries around the Baltic Sea, the BSPC (Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference) and the CBSS (Council of the Baltic Sea States) once a year in an Annual Round Table meeting. The Baltic Sea Labour Forum and the Annual Round Table meetings will be an open co-operation platform for all committed employer and trade union organisations as well as parliament and government representatives.

The mission of the Baltic Sea Labour Forum is to work together through Social Dialogue in order to promote a fair, competitive and sustainable Baltic Sea Region.

The objectives of the Baltic Sea Labour Forum are

- finding joint solutions to commonly identified challenges to employers, employees and governments alike. For example free movement of labour, youth employment, the lack of skilled labour force, unfair competition and grey economy
- influencing policy and decision-making in the field of labour market policies, e.g. by issuing joint opinions and recommendations
- promoting transnational social dialogue, based on the responsibility of social partners for the development of labour market policies in the Baltic Sea Region;
- networking and exchange of experience between the social partners and political institutions and the Information Centres for commuters in the Baltic Sea Region.



A one year project (ForumSD^{BSR}) has already commenced in November 2011

in order to

- facilitate the transition from the BSLN to the Baltic Sea Labour Forum and build up the BSLF-secretariat at the premises of the CBSS - Secretariat in Stockholm
- prepare the second round table of the Baltic Sea Labour Forum in autumn 2012
- develop cooperative structures for the employers' associations in the Baltic Sea Region.

Dr. Thomas Klischan, General Manager of Nordmetall, the employers association of the metal and electronics industry, Germany: *“The Baltic Sea Labour Forum serves as an excellent framework to develop a structured co-operation platform of employers in the Baltic Sea Region. It is vital for enterprises to safeguard fair competition and to diminish trade barriers in order to secure a competitive economic environment”.*

Jan Lundin, Director General of the CBSS Secretariat: *“Russia will follow the current German Presidency of the CBSS in July 2012 and this will underline the importance of Russian participation in the Baltic Sea Labour Forum.”*

Mikko Mäenpää, President of the Finnish Confederation of Professionals STTK, Finland: *“The BSLN project was a success because it brought together various social actors around the Baltic Sea. But we are still facing challenges in the region, for example in relation with the growing cross-border-labour markets. The existing differences in standards of living and labour market models increase the need for a broad cooperation.”*

Franz Thönnies, MP, German Parliament, former Parliamentary State Secretary, Member of the Standing Committee of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference: *“The BSLF is continuing the successful cooperation between the social partners and the political bodies in the Baltic Sea Region to strengthen the social dialogue. 20 years after establishing the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference and the Council of Baltic Sea States to deal with the political challenges of the region, the BSLF should deal with the challenges of developing a sustainable and fair labour market in our region.”*



The Baltic Sea Labour Forum strives at synchronizing its priorities with those of other stakeholders and strategies in the Baltic Sea Region, such as the Northern Dimension, the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and North-West Russia Strategy 2020.

The Enlarged Steering Committee is the highest strategical decision-making body of the Baltic Sea Labour Forum. It comprises of one representative each of the BSLF-member organizations as well as observers and is representing the social partners and the political institutions in the Baltic Sea Region.

The members of the Baltic Sea Labour Forum commit themselves to the core aim of the Forum which is the promotion of Social Dialogue and tripartite structures and cooperation as a crucial element of sustainable economic growth and social development in the Baltic Sea Region. The members perceive that they have a responsibility to be actively influencing the development of the labour market in the Baltic Sea Region through development of the transnational tripartite Social Dialogue. All interested employers and trade union associations from the Baltic Sea Region are invited to participate in the Baltic Sea Labour Forum.

On behalf of the Baltic Sea Labour Forum,

Elīna Egle, Adviser on Economics, Entrepreneurship and Employment to the President, Chancery of the President of Latvia, Representative of the Employers' Confederation of Latvia (LDDK), Latvia

Mariya Grinnik, Chair of the Murmansk Region, The Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia, Russia

Dr. **Thomas Klischan**, General Manager of Nordmetall, the employers association of the metal and electronics industry, Germany

Igor Kovalchuk, Member of the Council of Confederation of Labour of Russia KTR, Russia

Jan Lundin, Director General of the CBSS Secretariat

Longin Komolowski, Representative NSZZ „Solidarność” Westpommerania, Poland

Mikko Mäenpää, President of the Finnish Confederation of Professionals STTK, Finland

Uwe Polkaehn, President of the Confederation of German Trade Unions Northern Region (DGB-Nord), Germany

Franz Thönnies, Member of Parliament, former Parliamentary State Secretary, Member of the Standing Committee of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference



Contacts:

Katariina Röbbelen-Voigt

BSLF Facilitator Team Member Former BSLN Project Manager

K.Roebbelen-Voigt@kooperationsstelle-hh.de

Silke Lorenz

BSLF Facilitator Team Member

ForumSD^{BSR} Project Coordinator

Lorenz@bwh-hamburg.de

Ilya Ermakov BSLF Facilitator Team Member CBSS Senior Adviser

Ilya.Ermakov@cbss.org

The Secretariat of the BSLF will be placed for an initial period at the premises of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Secretariat in Stockholm, Sweden: www.cbss.org/bslf

