



Action Plan for Cooperation between the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council 2018 – 2019

Introduction

The Baltic and Nordic countries are linked regionally, politically and economically. Cooperation of the Baltic and Nordic countries is grounded in shared values, mutual trust and solidarity. Cooperation of the Baltic and Nordic countries is a symbol of success.

Cooperation between the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council strives to find common solutions for current security, economic, environmental, demographic and other challenges to promote growth and welfare of our region.

The Baltic–Nordic region is characterised by credibility, development, sustainability and dialogue. Baltic–Nordic regional relationship, shared values and common interests provide a unique platform to face current challenges and build a common future.

This Action Plan provides a framework for cooperation between the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council aimed to promote sustainability, security, growth and welfare of the Region.

Priorities of the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council for 2018–2019

By joining forces and showing the collective political will, Baltic and Nordic countries will have more tools to foster growth of our countries and welfare of our nations. Security and defence, energy, transport and infrastructure, internal security and the control of external borders, health care and social questions, environmental protection of the Baltic Sea, research and education are those strategically important areas where coordinated actions could be useful for the region as a whole.

The Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council will strengthen the interaction between legislative and executive branches in order to better represent common regional interests, develop more comprehensive and inclusive regional cooperation as well as expand borders of cooperation and raise the Baltic–Nordic profile in international forums.

The Action Plan may be updated in accordance with changing regional and international environment.

Through close coordination, based on mutual trust, shared values and a common vision, cooperation between the Nordic Council and the Baltic Assembly in 2018–2019 will focus on the following priority areas:

1. A strong and responsible Baltic–Nordic Region in a globalised world

International issues have a direct impact on Baltic and Nordic countries. We therefore need to work closely with our neighbors and partners that share the same values. The Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council will strive to ensure that democracy, rule of law, human rights and the principles of equality are always respected and high on the international agenda.

Common positions, decisions and projects of the Baltic and Nordic countries should promote sustainability and development and send a strong message of Baltic–Nordic partnership and cooperation to the rest of the world.

The Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council will promote visibility of the Baltic–Nordic region on the European level and other fora. Comprehensive political cooperation, coordination and representation are increasingly necessary to defend the region’s interests within the EU and other international organisations.

The world is facing enormous climate and environmental challenges, which can only be solved by international cooperation. Together the Baltic and Nordic countries should be in the forefront of green transition.

The Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council will focus on:

- Strengthening of the Region’s ability to achieve good ecological status in the Baltic Sea;
- Join forces in the dialogue with the European Parliament to promote issues of common interest for the Nordic-Baltic region;
- Support the achievement of the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs).

2. Safe and secure Baltic–Nordic Region

Our countries are confronted with security threats such as hybrid warfare, cyber-attacks, propaganda, organised crime, violent terrorism, irregular migration, human trafficking etc. The Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council will continue cooperation on foreign, defence and security issues. Baltic and Nordic countries should act jointly to find common solutions to the challenges of external and internal security environment. Our countries should address security threats in a joint and coordinated manner.

The Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council will focus on:

- Coordination of actions and joint measures against organised crime;
- Continued cooperation in order to combat human trafficking;
- Fight corruption;
- Disaster preparedness and crisis management and civil protection;
- Fight against hybrid threats;
- Strengthening of the freedom of media;
- Migration and Integration;
- Prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism;
- Strengthening of the EU external borders.

3. Inclusive and developing Nordic-Baltic Region

The Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council give an increased emphasis on the need to create new jobs, facilitate labour mobility, promote skills development thus increasing employment and productivity. The Baltic and Nordic countries should be in the forefront of gender equality. Gender equality has a highly positive impact on social and economic development. The Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council attach great value to well-connected transport and infrastructure, a sustainable and secure energy market, fair and inclusive health care and social policy. Our Region must focus even more on research and innovation in order to promote growth and innovative economy. Data resources and digital technologies must be used for the purpose of achieving economic success and the well-being of citizens.

The Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council will focus on:

- Circular economy and waste management;
- A sustainable, efficient and interconnected electricity market;
- Climate policy and local and regional pollution;
- Interconnected transport infrastructure in the Region;
- Health care, social policy and demographic changes;
- Gender equality;
- Education, research and innovation;
- Digital infrastructure and digital competence¹.

Copenhagen, 27 November 2017

¹ 25 April 2017, the ministers in charge of digital development from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Faroe Islands, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania adopted a declaration: [The Nordic-Baltic region: a digital frontrunner](#)