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Baltics contribute to fostering energy security, self-sustainability, resilience, and connectivity in the Baltic Sea region

On 27 - 29 August 2023, the 32nd Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) took place in Berlin, Germany. The topic of the conference was "Strengthening the Resilience of the Democratic Baltic Sea Region. Boosting Democratic, Digital and Maritime Resilience Based on Reliable Neighbourliness and Close Cooperation".

Acting on the initiative of the Baltic Assembly, the new BSPC Working Group on Energy Security, Self-sustainability, Resilience and Connectivity was established. Kaspars Briškens was appointed the Chair of the new working group, and its first meeting is planned for 15-16 October in Riga. The main topics planned to be discussed during the meetings of the working group include 1) joint measures towards an open, competitive, fully integrated and resilient regional energy market; 2) building interconnected, sustainable and resilient transport systems together; and 3) accelerating the transition to a single digital market resilient to internal and external threats.

The 32nd BSPC was opened by President of the German Bundestag Bärbel Bas and President of the BSPC Johannes Schraps. Both highlighted the importance of supporting Ukraine as well as the vital role of the organisation in fostering resilience, security, and sustainability of the Baltic Sea region. Bärbel Bas underlined the support of the Baltic Sea countries for Ukraine attacked by Russia. It is an important concern for her: "We must and will continue to stand by Ukraine's side". She explained that the brutal Russian attack was also a turning point for the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. After Russia left the institutions of the Baltic Sea region, it was "important that the other neighbouring countries cooperate all the more closely," said President of the

German Bundestag.

During the 32nd BSPC, numerous issues were discussed, including increasing support for Ukraine, protecting the NATO eastern flank and the Baltic States, boosting democratic resilience, accelerating green transition, undertaking commitments to enhance biodiversity, speeding up the clearing of munitions dumped in the Baltic Sea and involving young people in policy-shaping debates.

Chair of the Natural Resources and Environment Committee of the Baltic Assembly Tiit Maran in one of the discussions explained that biodiversity loss and climate warming are two manifestations of today's environmental crisis. He explained that treating them separately carries the risk that solving one will lead to an even more complicated situation for the other. Tiit Maran also drew attention to the vital role of the human dimension in environmental protection. "We are part of biodiversity, we cannot live without it," he added and called for greater efforts in educating people about biodiversity and their part in protecting the climate.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia Margus Tsahkna in a video speech highlighted that strengthening the resilience of the Baltic Sea region is of utmost importance given the challenges Europe is facing nowadays. He reminded that "Ukraine is the superstar of resilience", and called for supporting Ukraine and its efforts as long as possible, but also for holding Russia accountable for the horrors committed in Ukraine that should happen in an international tribunal.

The participants of the 32nd BSPC had the honour of meeting President of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier. "Russia’s war against Ukraine has shaken all of Europe. But I know that for the people in Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia, people on the eastern flank of NATO, it has stirred up the most harrowing memories. I have spoken about this during many of my visits to the region. And I’ve made it clear that we stand by you! Your security is also our security. We stand together against Putin and his war,"

said Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

At the end of the 32nd BSPC, the Resolution was adopted, showing full and active support for Ukraine as well as clear condemnation of Russian activities. The 32nd BSPC denounced "the completely unjust and full-scale brutal military attack and invasion by the Russian Federation against the sovereignty, independence, and people of Ukraine" and underlined "the imperative to fully restore the territorial integrity of Ukraine, which explicitly includes the Crimean Peninsula".

Read more about the 32nd BSPC here.

Photos