

RESOLUTION
of the 41st Session of the Baltic Assembly

The Baltic Assembly,

having convened for its 41st Session on 27-28 October 2022 in Riga, the Republic of Latvia,

having discussed the results of the Latvian Presidency in the Baltic Assembly, fostering a strong and united Baltic society prepared to meet the challenges posed by external threats as well as immediate actions and long-term solutions for building resilient, interconnected and closely coordinated energy systems in the Baltic States,

condemning the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine and **calling on** the Russian Federation to stop the aggression in Ukraine and put an end to the humanitarian crisis that is a direct result of its violent attacks,

underlining the enormous need for the Baltic States to be united in supporting Ukraine, isolating the Russian Federation from the European community, and addressing joint challenges and threats that arise from the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine,

calling for support for the creation of a recovery plan for Ukraine after the Russian Federation's invasion and **insisting** that the recovery of the damages shall be financed by the aggressor,

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,

emphasising strong support for the active role of the European Union in preserving peace, strengthening international security and reshaping the energy policy in the region,

welcoming the results of the Three Seas Initiative Parliamentary Forum 2022 held in Riga and **highlighting**, in particular, the importance of energy security that can be achieved by the diversification of energy supply and the development of locally produced energy,

supporting joint activities of the Baltic States, especially during times of crisis and uncertainty, and **welcoming** the intensive and successful coordination between the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers aimed at strengthening the security and welfare 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 and cyber warfare, and **emphasising** the significant role of the allied deterrence and defence posture in the region, especially the importance and necessity for a permanent U.S. presence,

underlining the vital role of societal resilience of the Baltic States as a prerequisite for ensuring the preparedness of the society to resist threats of various kinds, such as war, propaganda, disinformation, anti-democratic sentiments, division and others, and **highlighting** that culture is at the core of societal resilience,

strongly supporting the joint initiative of the CERN Baltic Group and CERN on Advanced Particle Therapy Center for the Baltic States and **highlighting** the importance of the initiative as an integrated flagship project for the Baltic States, falling entirely within the scope of the national policies of the Baltic States, Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and the Mission on Cancer of the European Union, especially in the pillars of diagnostics, treatment and quality of life improvement for cancer patients and their families,

reaffirming our readiness to continue monitoring the implementation of the Rail Baltica project and reminding the governments and partners in the European Union about the project's military mobility potential in the region,

emphasising that, in the interests of attracting external labour, the Baltic States should create secure jobs for their citizens and **stressing** that by creating safe labour conditions for the Baltic citizens, the countries will be better placed to attract labour from other countries with the citizens' safety serving as the best guarantee for promoting trust among the workers abroad,

reiterating the pivotal role of the Baltic States as free and democratic countries in supporting other people's efforts and aspiration for freedom, democracy, the rule of law and civil society, and the plurality of information, considering, in particular, the current situation in Ukraine, but also in Belarus and Russia, and **reaffirming** the readiness of the Baltic States to continue supporting and developing the entire Eastern Partnership region,

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 defence cooperation of the Baltic States:

- to increase the defence spending of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and to invest heavily 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;
- considering the significance of resilient societies in strengthening the security situation, to construct a practical response to increase the resilience of the Baltic society;
- 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 to effectively enhance cooperation in cyber security;
- to facilitate intergovernmental negotiations and continue 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;

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 develop the concept for a comprehensive security model of crisis preparedness coordination in the Baltic States;

- to revise the crisis management approach in the Baltic States during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to identify effective practices as well as errors in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to ensure learning from each other's experiences;
- to prepare a long-term strategy for the Baltic States for ensuring coordinated actions in addressing the challenges posed by COVID-19 and future crises;
- to set up a working group of the Baltic States to elaborate on the possibility to unify capabilities and competencies of the national security institutions regarding information and communications technology innovations;
- to strengthen 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;

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 Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania;
- to find a joint approach to ensuring psychosocial support services for the Ukrainian refugees arriving in the Baltic States;
- to provide the best possible employment opportunities for Ukrainian refugees upon their arrival, thus empowering them to take back control of their lives;
- to create key points of contact between institutions, local citizens and Ukrainian refugees in the Baltic States;
- to ensure 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 Latvia, Estonia 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 exchange of information between the Baltic States:

- to jointly agree on a white paper about the strategic goals to fight disinformation and increase social resilience of the Baltic States through increasing media competencies and media literacy in the Baltic region;
- to evaluate the possibility of introducing a joint programme to improve media literacy in the Baltic States;
- to start negotiations about the Baltic information platform that would serve as a reliable source of knowledge about events and developments in the Baltic region in the Latvian, Estonian, Lithuanian, English and Russian languages;

regarding cooperation in the field of combatting organised crime:

- 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 health care sector:

- 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 assess 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 find a solution to reach an agreement on automatic recognition of the registered medications for rare diseases in the Baltic States;
- to identify clinical research projects that would benefit from cooperation and start discussions about joint participation of the Baltic States;
- considering the health effects of the usage of tobacco and alcohol, to speed up the implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and SAFER initiative of the World Health Organisation;
- to create a format for coordinating public health actions in the Baltic States to prevent the use of alcohol and tobacco;
- to start negotiations about relocating the European Office for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases of the World Health Organisation from Moscow to the Baltic States;
- to start discussions about a joint system for addressing medicine shortages in the Baltic States efficiently and timely;
- to find a joint solution for strengthening the capacities of the food laboratories in the Baltic States;
- to encourage joint Baltic projects supporting risk-based and science-based decisions about food safety;
- 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 share information on the progress in implementing the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular, the 2030 national targets on poverty reduction;
- to share experiences on measures to reduce the impact of inflation and their effectiveness;
- to evaluate and draw conclusions about the impacts of current crises on poor and vulnerable groups in the Baltic societies and to discuss possible cooperation areas;
- to compare the gaps in the social protection systems of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and to identify common problems that can be addressed regionally;

regarding the economic cooperation of the Baltic States:

- considering the economic impact of the disparities of COVID-19 restrictions in the Baltic region, to speed up the synchronisation of the regulations and to consider the reintroduction of the so-called “Baltic bubble” as a short-term recovery strategy;
- to agree on joint priorities or specialisation of the Baltic States regarding the strategic economic sectors for encouraging smart investments in the region;
- to intensify cooperation regarding a pan-Baltic single index classification that would stimulate foreign investments in the Baltic States;
- 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 look for opportunities to deepen the interconnection of the Baltic economies that will ensure faster post-pandemic recovery;
- to jointly develop alternative market-based funding sources to foster immediate recovery of the economies of the Baltic States;
- to increase 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 intensify the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Ministers of Finance of the Baltic States in November 2017 and use the Accelerator Fund of the European Innovation Council to create a pan-Baltic capital market;
- to continue highlighting the importance of the 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 enhance the cooperation of the Baltic States via joint projects within the Digital Innovation Network of the Baltic Sea Region, the European network of Digital Innovation Hubs and Connecting Europe Facility to increase the interconnectedness of the Baltic States;
- to further develop the cooperation of the Baltic States in the three major focuses of the EU digital transformation: cross-border digital services, data exchange and eID recognition;
- to boost investments in digital transformation aimed at scaling up the unicorn start-ups of the Baltic States;

- to improve the mechanisms for regular exchange of experience and knowledge about digital transformation in the Baltic States;
- to evaluate the possibility of developing joint Baltic business incubators of the European Space Agency;
- to enhance the usage of electronic signatures between 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 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 introduce e-invoicing in the Baltic States;
- to agree on a common regional approach and overcome obstacles in using Real-Time Economy;

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

- 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;
- based on an analysis of the circular economy in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, to identify practical cooperation activities of the Baltic States regarding, e.g., recycling textiles, reusing and repairing products and other areas of mutual interest;
- to start discussions about a Baltic strategy for sustainable extraction and management of peat as a renewable natural resource in the region;
- 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 start negotiations about a joint electric vehicle charging network in the Baltic States;
- 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 start discussions about a regional hydrogen strategy for the Baltic States;
- 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;
- to analyse the possibilities of establishing a joint waste packaging system in the Baltic States;
- to continue 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 create a joint study about the technical situation in the existing natural gas distribution and transmission systems in the Baltic States, including an exploration of the possibilities for their adaptation for hydrogen transmission;
- to investigate 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 start discussions about a common approach on 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 re-evaluate the possibility of using the EU Recovery and Resilience fund for increasing energy production capacity in 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 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 joint efforts of the Baltic States in elaborating a solution on improving the existing electricity trade regime with third countries, including reaching an agreement about the regional transmission tariff;
- 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;
- to continue the coordination of activities towards a common regional electricity and gas market of the Baltic States;
- to continue the technical implementation of the synchronization of the Baltic electricity networks with the continental European network;

regarding the implementation of the Rail Baltica project:

- 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:

- 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 evaluate the necessity for the national institutions of the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania to become members of the EU STEM Coalition, an EU-wide network that works to build better STEM education in Europe;
- 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;
- 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 continue coordinating the 3B cooperation in space-related research and to identify the joint activities and projects to be implemented in the future;
- to start 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 develop a coordinated approach of the Baltic States towards solving common challenges in increasing scientific capacity and excellence in the Baltic research area;
- 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 consider the possibility to establish the CERN Internship Programme for students in the Baltic States;

regarding cultural cooperation and minimising environmental footprint:

- to implement and ensure funding for a new initiative—Baltic Capitals of Culture—aimed at promoting tourism and cultural interaction between the Baltic States;
- to allocate additional funding for the Baltic Culture Fund (BCF) in 2023 in the amount of 10% of the 2022 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 start negotiations about joint participation of the Baltic States in Expo 2025, which will be held in Osaka, Japan;
- to evaluate the existing practice of the Baltic Culture Fund of granting funding and to provide an opportunity to fund projects implemented in the Baltic States;
- to improve the format for the exchange of best practices in reopening the cultural sector 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;
- to agree on a common approach of the Baltic States regarding moving towards the rejection of fireworks, balloons, plastic confetti and other environmentally harmful activities;
- based on the approach of the Nordic countries, to explore the possibility of applying an international marketing and communication strategy for the Baltic region.

Riga, 28 October 2022