

FORUM DECLARATION

ADOPTED BY THE 6th BALTIC SEA TOURISM FORUM

The participants of 6th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum “Sustainability, Growth and Cooperation”, convened in Ringsted, Denmark, on 25th to 26th September 2013,

- welcoming the call of the 22nd Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) to promote a joint transnational cooperative platform for tourism,
- emphasising the importance of the development of transnational tourism products and the promotion of product quality in the Baltic Sea Region against the background of the increasing competition in the global tourism market,
- welcoming the promising development of new tourism projects since the 5th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum in Rostock, which partly have reached the status of seed money projects, funded by the European Union and the Swedish Institute, in the fields of cultural and maritime heritage tourism, active and rural tourism, tourism SME and cluster cooperation,
- reiterating the importance to involve non-EU countries in tourism cooperation,
- welcoming the establishment of the Steering Committee “Tourism Policy in the Baltic Sea Region” under the umbrella of Priority Area Tourism during the 6th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum, as an instrument to strengthen the policy dimension in tourism cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region,

call on the governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the Council of Baltic Sea States, the European Union and the authorities responsible for preparing the EU programme period 2014- 2020, as well as tourism organizations and networks, relevant projects, and further tourism stakeholders,

Regarding the profiling of the Baltic Sea Region as a model region for sustainable tourism development, to

1. recognise “sustainable tourism development” as a dimension under a priority related to prosperity in the ongoing revision process of the long term objectives of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS);
2. support the exchange of best practice approaches and knowledge as to the development and the marketing of sustainable products and services in the tourism sector, building on the strategy paper for sustainable tourism development in the Baltic Sea Region which was developed in the respective flagship project in Priority Area Tourism in cooperation with the CBSS-Baltic 21;
3. promote a customer-oriented transparency as to sustainable tourism products, services, and destinations;

4. establish sustainability standards to be applied in cruise and boat tourism with regard to cultural and natural heritage based products and to promote a regional knowledge sharing network among public and private stakeholders, e.g. cruise industry, port authorities, tour operators, and NGOs relevant in this field;
5. support resource efficient and environmentally friendly solutions in tourism as to energy, water and transport, taking into account the strong variation of demand due to the seasonal character of the tourism economy;

Regarding the EU Operational Programmes 2014-2020 in the Baltic Sea Region, to

6. introduce tourism related indicative actions in appropriate thematic priorities of the future Operational Programmes, e.g. in technological development and innovation, ICT, competitiveness of SMEs, low carbon economy and climate change adaptation, sustainable use of cultural and natural heritage, labour mobility, education, lifelong learning and maritime policies;
7. ensure availability of and access to funding for seed money projects as a tool to explore and validate new project approaches and to build momentum for the creation of new flagship projects in Priority Area Tourism in the EUSBSR;
8. actively consider the interfaces for macroregional and cross border cooperation in the “Strategy on social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of the Russian Federation until 2020”, especially under the tourism objective with a focus on sustainable cruise tourism, eco-tourism, event and congress tourism;
9. support the cooperation among projects and the dissemination of results also beyond the respective programme area across the whole Baltic Sea Region;

Regarding future priorities of tourism cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region to

10. develop current seed money projects and new initiatives into relevant transnational networks and clusters as a contribution to shape the profile of the region as a sustainable tourist destination;
11. focus on durable approaches in tourism cooperation with a clear orientation on sustainability, innovation, growth and employment;
12. promoting the marketing and branding of the region with tourism being an important building block of the Baltic Sea Region general profile;

The participants welcome the kind offer of the Region Blekinge to host the **7th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum** in Karlskrona on 1st and 2nd October 2014 in co-operation with Priority Area Tourism in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

Ringsted/ Denmark, September 26, 2013

