

## FORUM DECLARATION

### ADOPTED BY THE 7<sup>th</sup> BALTIC SEA TOURISM FORUM

The participants of the 7<sup>th</sup> Baltic Sea Tourism Forum “Business, Innovation and Partnership”, convened in Karlskrona, Sweden, on 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014,

- recalling the European Commission’s Communication on "A European Strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism" of February 2014 according to which coastal and maritime tourism is the largest maritime activity in the European Union with coastal regions attracting more than one third of all tourism business in Europe,
- taking note of the Staff Working Document on “A Sustainable Blue Growth Agenda for the Baltic Sea Region” of May 2014 which attributes a high potential to coastal tourism, yachting and marinas aggregated over the Baltic Sea Region, recommending the development of a comprehensive strategy in this field, including a platform of authorities and tourism operators,
- welcoming the renewed long term priorities of the Council of the Baltic Sea States which emphasize the importance of the sustainable tourism development in the Baltic Sea Region,
- sharing the common objective to mobilize of the full tourism potential of the Baltic Sea region through strengthened cooperation in the fields of marketing, product and service development which are looked at as strategic activities by the Council of the Baltic Sea States,
- welcoming the call of the 23rd Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference to make concerted efforts to promote a sustainable cultural and ecological tourism throughout the region,
- thanking the competent authorities for having introduced tourism related indicative actions in the relevant EU operational programmes 2014- 2020 and their readiness to actively support the process of project development and the dissemination of results of former tourism projects,

call on the governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the Council of Baltic Sea States, the European Union, the tourism organizations, industry, networks, NGO’s and other tourism stakeholders, within their spheres of competence and activities,

#### **regarding the exploitation of the tourism potential in the Baltic Sea Region to**

1. capitalize on its richness in cultural, nature and maritime heritage and to offer a diversified portfolio of sustainable products and services to travelers with a view to extend the tourism season;
2. exploit synergies of maritime and land based offers in the cruising and yachting tourism through an effective partnership of the relevant stakeholders on site and a targeted cooperation at transnational level;



3. develop a joint approach of public and private stakeholders of the transport and the tourism sector in order to improve the accessibility, visibility and the attractiveness of rural areas and smaller destinations;
4. facilitate comprehensive communication and cooperation of partners representing cultural heritage sites, like the UNESCO and world heritage stakeholders, creating a sustainable, visible and attractive cultural heritage offer for travelers in the region;
5. facilitate the development of cultural routes as a sustainable approach to promote cultural heritage tourism in the Baltic Sea Region;

**regarding the strengthening of the sustainable, competitive and innovative edge of tourism development to**

6. promote the integration of digital business in the tourism economy in order to improve the market access of SMEs;
7. develop and apply mobile technologies to improve support and communication with the traveler before, during and after the travel process;
8. involve businesses and business-related tourism stakeholders to foster market-oriented solutions and non-technological innovations;
9. support tourism projects with a transnational perspective in order to facilitate the development of cost-effective, relevant and sustainable solutions for the Baltic Sea Region while avoiding fragmentation;

**regarding the development of the Baltic Sea Region as a tourism destination in global competition to**

10. market the Baltic Sea Region as one attractive destination in order to meet the growing international competition and the rise of remote source markets;
11. create core messages under an umbrella marketing strategy in order to explain the Baltic Sea Region to potential travelers from third countries, capitalizing on its assets in global terms, e.g. safety and security, creativity and innovation, an intact nature, a rich cultural heritage, a varied history and an open life style;
12. identify and select transnational tourism segments with a high development potential for the Baltic Sea Region with regard to relevant international markets;
13. facilitate a cooperation structure to manage joint marketing and project initiatives at transnational level, as envisaged in the “Baltic Sea Tourism Center” approach.

The participants welcome the kind offer of the Ministry of Sport and Tourism of the Republic of Poland to host the **8<sup>th</sup> Baltic Sea Tourism Forum** in Gdańsk on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015 as event of the Polish presidency in the Council of the Baltic Sea States and in co-operation with the Coordinator of the Priority Area Tourism in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

Karlskrona / Sweden, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014