

## **FORUM DECLARATION ADOPTED BY THE 11th BALTIC SEA TOURISM FORUM**

The participants of the 11<sup>th</sup> Baltic Sea Tourism Forum (BSTF) 2018 „On the edge of change” convened in Riga, Latvia, from 14 to 15 November 2018,

- appreciating the joint organization of both the BSTF and the Latvian Tourism Forum, and thereby underlining the standing of tourism in the Baltic Sea Region,
- thanking the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia and the Ministry of Economics of Latvia for hosting the forum in Riga,
- welcoming the macro-regional territorial monitoring system which is developed by ESPON for EUSBSR; gives access to indicators for five domains: economic performance and competitiveness, access to services, markets and jobs, innovative territories, social inclusion and quality of life and environmental quality. By using these indicators regions are able to measure the progress in achieving territorial cohesion in the Baltic Sea Region,
- welcoming EuroAccess Macro-Regions an online info point and search tool for EU funding, which provides the key data of more than 200 EU funding programs,
- welcoming the European Sustainability Award, to recognize the efforts and creativity of European people, businesses and organizations who work towards reaching the UN Sustainable Development Goals,
- appreciating the activities of the BSPC in sustainable tourism development and welcoming the final report on sustainable tourism in the BSR 2018 and their recommendations,
- fostering a closer cooperation with organizations like the UNWTO and policy areas in between the EUSBSR like Policy Area Culture or HA Capacity,

call on the governments of the Baltic Sea Region countries, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the European Union, tourism organizations, networks, NGOs, private entities and other tourism stakeholders,

### **Regarding creation vs preservation**

- to keep the focus on developing the Baltic Sea Region as an unique and distinctive tourism destination, with regions and cities telling their stories influenced by history,
- to campaign for (innovative) projects and processes setting and following actual market trends and ideas, but keeping the focus on the USP of the BSR,
- to, identify and ensure a solid financing basis for them,

because there have been created so many ideas in the BSR tourism for the moment when European Union funding is no longer available for funding marketing activities.

### **Regarding digitalization vs preservation**

- to motivate tourism stakeholders to break up with established structures and make use of the possibilities digitalization offers,
- to use digital media channels in a proper way without “overloading” the target groups,
- to find an efficient way to combine them with ordinary marketing tools,

because digitalization plays a role in nearly every sector. Processing of new technologies is getting faster but makes live smarter and more comfortable.

### **Regarding sustainable tourism cooperation post 2020**

- to accept the Baltic Sea Region as a destination in a global competition which makes it obligatory for the stakeholders to think and act in that way,
- following the UN SDGs to support promoting the Sustainable Tourism Award, which pays tribute to most sustainable destination, product and exceptional services and private tourism services provider (business),
- to support circular economy solutions in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR),
- to develop and establish the BSTC Tourism Market Report (TMM<sup>®</sup>) and Tourism Trend Radar (TTR<sup>®</sup>),
- to find proper solutions for funding and/or financing tourism activities in the BSR post 2020,
- to actively support the PAC Tourism in the process “Revision of the EUSBSR Action plan”,
- to share and support the Position paper on “Sustainable tourism development in the Baltic Sea Region post 2020”,
- to actively support the activities of the Baltic Sea Tourism Center and its newly established Expert Groups on Sustainable Tourism, Market Research, Training Offerings and Tourism Policies,
- to promote the participation of stakeholders from non-EU countries to ensure integration of all countries from the Baltic Sea Region.

The participants welcome the next, the 12th Baltic Sea Tourism Forum in autumn 2019.

Riga, 15 November 2018