

Youth Vision Statement Beyond 2030



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Ministerial: Youth Edition



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Vision Statement

Despite the impact of the current pandemic, many young people in the Baltic Sea Region are looking positively to the future and want to play an active role in creating a vision beyond 2030. This vision could not come at a more important time; brave ideas are needed to build a more resilient region after the recent COVID-19 crisis.

In preparation of the Council of the Baltic Sea States' Ministerial meeting under the Lithuanian Presidency on 1st June 2021, all young people living in the region were invited to share their vision and focal points for the region beyond 2030 in the CBSS Ministerial 2021: Youth Edition.

In collaboration with the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry, the Lithuanian National Youth Council (LiJOT) and the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat, youth between 16–30 years could learn from experts; listen to youth representatives; ask all their questions to the vice-Foreign Minister of Lithuania; and most importantly actively participate in shaping the future of the region.

This **Vision Statement beyond 2030** summarizes the main ideas of the young people and shall be used as a basis for future policies developed in the region.

Young people in the region are making their voices heard, as they are most affected by current policies.

The Council of the Baltic Sea States encourages young people to actively participate in policymaking and therefore founded the Baltic Sea Youth Platform.

Our Vision for the Baltic Sea Region

We envision our region to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the European Youth Goals.

The CBSS must prioritise the implementation of the Baltic 2030 Action Plan and the European Youth Goals and create a vision beyond 2030 with even more ambitious goals for the region. Thus, regular reports on the state of implementation shall be published.

We envision our region to make the rule of law and safeguarding of democratic values a priority beyond 2030.

The CBSS must prioritise the safeguarding of its fundamental values through an annual report on the status of the rule of law and democracy in the region and on how the collaboration within the region can strengthen these values.

We envision our region to be a forerunner of gender equality and overcoming social imbalance.

The CBSS must be a forum for discussion and a platform for exchange for best practices in the field of gender equality and social imbalance. Everyone living in our region shall have equal rights and opportunities.

We envision our region to combat the spread of misinformation. The CBSS should function as an important platform to provide reliable facts and reports on the region.

The CBSS must prioritise being the reliable source of information for all actors in the region. Therefore, providing trustable facts and reports on the status of the region must be prioritised.

We envision a safe place to live together and create formats for dialogue and economic collaboration.

The CBSS must prioritise being a forum for open and trusted dialogue between all stakeholders in the region. Formats to meet, exchange views and share best practices are important to create trust and collaboration; such formats can be organised virtually or physically in the region.

We envision a region that is dealing with challenges together and including neighbouring countries into the discussion.

The CBSS must promote dialogue with other intergovernmental councils as well as the exchange of information with other EU macro-regional strategies and neighbouring countries to build on synergies.

We demand to see the current pandemic as a turning point to rethink ongoing and future activities and the use of resources.

The CBSS shall reevaluate the use of resources in addition to emphasizing the need for sustainable travel and tourism.

We demand to foster digitalisation all over our region and share our experience within and beyond the region.

The CBSS shall be used as a platform to foster digitalisation all over the Baltic Sea Region and to collaborate on the development of critical infrastructure for all citizens. All generations shall be supported to learn how to handle the new technologies not to exclude anyone.

We demand a strong cooperation between EU countries and non-EU countries in our region and continuous dialogue under the principle of consensus.

The CBSS shall be used as a platform for information sharing between EU and non-EU countries on topics where a consensus can be reached.

Structure of the CBSS

We demand the institutionalization of the Baltic Sea Youth Platform as a forum for youth organisations and non-formal youth groups in the region to make their voices heard and create a continuous dialogue.

The Baltic Sea Youth Platform became an important forum for decision makers and young people in the region to exchange views.

Building trust and collaboration between youth organisations demands continuity and resilient structures that enable young people to implement their ambitious visions.

We envision a youth-based version of the presidency of the CBSS. The Baltic Sea Youth Platform should facilitate the delegation of young people to become a shadow committee and integral part of the CBSS decision-making.

Meaningful youth participation demands a structured entry point for young people to take part in the decision-making.

We envision a stronger co-presidency in the CBSS to create harmonised long-term strategies for the work of the CBSS.

The focal points of the CBSS should be more aligned and therefore we suggest that two countries should hold the CBSS presidency for a two-year period.

Building trust and collaboration between countries is at the core of the CBSS and should be lived up to at every stage of the work of the CBSS; hence, a shared presidency will build this trust and enable the region to rely on a long-term strategic approach.

CBSS Long-term Priorities

We, the young people in the Baltic Sea Region, acknowledge the importance of the three long-term priorities of the CBSS. All areas are crucial for the region today and in the future.

We would like to present focal points from a youth perspective for each of the working areas of the CBSS to focus on in the near future.

As we understand that it can be challenging to track the success of certain initiatives, projects, and long-term strategies, we suggest publishing regular reports written by researchers in the region. This will ensure both the successful implementation of the focal point and the creation of reliable resources for people in the region. Furthermore, it will strengthen the collaboration between the CBSS and research institutions in the region and create visibility of the organisation and the important work achieved within the Baltic Sea region.

Regional Identity

Focal points from a youth perspective:

- Institutionalising the Baltic Sea Youth Platform and building long-term perspectives for meaningful youth participation in the CBSS, EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference.
- Strengthening youth participation in rural areas and enabling social inclusion through youth activities.
- Building a platform for collaboration between stakeholders in the field of culture to raise awareness of the common cultural heritage and to strengthen multilingualism in the region.
- Promoting collaboration between higher education institutions to perform research on various topics pertaining to the region, such as on the mental health of children and young adults and finding meaningful ways to inform the public such as through reports.

Reports on the state of meaningful youth participation in the region; the state of academic freedom; and the state of multilingualism and cultural heritage in the region.

Sustainable & Prosperous Region

Focal points from a youth perspective:

- Improving sustainable transportation and focusing on building sustainable and green infrastructure within the Baltic Sea Region.
- Cooperating to track CO2 emissions across member states, thereby advancing the opportunity to properly measure and coordinate the efforts.
- Making it a priority to be in continuous dialogue with businesses residing in all or at least in several of the member states to further the green transition.

Reports on the state of implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the region, the state of CO2 emissions across the member states, and the state of international organisations' progress to further the green transition.

Civil Security

Focal points from a youth perspective:

- Integrating young people into the work of civil security entities, enabling them to learn and build networks from the start.
- Emphasising the importance of data and cyber security, building regional structures to combat cyber security threads, and at the same time securing data protection for the people in the region.
- Sharing information and training on disaster risk prevention and prevention of crimes in the region, especially focusing on cross-border risks and crimes.

Reports on the state of implementation of the Sendai framework, policies to prevent disaster risk and best practice sharing on youth integration into civil security entities.

Children At Risk

Focal points from a youth perspective:

- Collaborating in enhancing the mental health and self-awareness of children and young adults by providing support (e.g. trainings, materials) within their educational institutions (e.g. schools, HEIs) organisations, youth centres and elsewhere
- Ensuring equal opportunities for children from rural areas, more vulnerable groups and young people with limited opportunities as well as providing support and training for them and their environment (e.g. parents, teachers) to protect them from crimes and become active citizens.
- Investing into youth clubs and child protection centres especially in rural areas.

Reports on the state of mental health of children and young people in the region; policy reports on child protection policies; and best practice sharing for educational material.

Task Force Against Trafficking in Human Beings

Focal points from a youth perspective:

- Educating everyone – children, youth, adults, parents, teachers, social workers, police officers etc. – on how to prevent child exploitation in a digitalized world.
- Developing digital rapid response measures to enable anti-trafficking units to collaborate more effectively and act faster.
- Creating support systems for victims of human trafficking to avoid them getting stuck in a vicious cycle.

Reports on the state of sexual exploitation, child trafficking, and work exploitation in the region in addition to policy reports on current developments within the member states.

Communication

Focal points from a youth perspective:

- Developing a communication strategy to reach a broader audience in their native language.
- Strengthening the collaboration with traditional media in order to publish a common Baltic Sea column in several media across the region.
- Developing a CBSS podcast and short videos to inform the public about the activities of CBSS.

