



Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland

Undersecretary of State
Henryka Mościcka - Dendys

DPE.932.65.2025
Warsaw, 5. November 2025

Participants of the XVIII UBC General Conference
Stupsk/Dolina Charlotty

Distinguished Organizers, Guests and Participants of the Conference,

It is my honour and privilege to address you at the opening session of the XVIII General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities – an annual event that has already become a significant element of the multi-vector cooperation within the Baltic Sea basin. Although I cannot join you in person, I am really pleased to share with you some thoughts from the perspective of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

The value of multilateral Baltic cooperation lies in the multiple connections between various partners – be it governmental and non-governmental or local governments – fostering the creation of unique expert networks, enabling the exchange of information and good practices, as well as undertaking of joint, coordinated actions.

Poland holds the Presidency of the CBSS from 1 July 2025 until 30 June 2026. During our tenure we want to continue the practical cooperation focused and built on achievements of the previous presidencies, in line with the CBSS long-term priorities (Safe and Secure Region, Sustainable and Prosperous Region, as well as Regional Identity). We highly value the thorough cooperation within the Organization, as well as in the framework of four CBSS working groups/task forces. The Council of the Baltic Sea States has effectively contributed to creating strong transregional bonds on various levels. We note with satisfaction that active participation in different formats, offered by the CBSS, brought tangible results and valuable experience for multiple stakeholders not only from Poland, but also from other countries of the region.

At the same time, contemporary threats stemming from current geopolitical situation are often aimed at undermining mutual trust and understanding – the values that are especially important in the regional cooperation. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and increased hybrid and disinformation activities targeted in particularly acute way the Baltic Sea region, prompting a significant re-evaluation of the EU and regional strategic priorities and goals. The evolving security landscape underscores the importance of building a long-term resilience through

a comprehensive approach. For that reason we see the need to strengthen the political pillar of the Organisation towards a more focused approach on regional security. Our goal is a better coordination in such areas as protection of critical infrastructure in the Baltic Sea region, countering the shadow fleet, as well as ensuring resilience to GNSS jamming and spoofing.

Reshaping the regional cooperation and tailoring it to the current geopolitical situation is not only a challenge that we should face, but also an opportunity to move forward and emerge stronger, as underlined in the recommendations presented by the High-level Wise Persons in their report in May 2025. Consequently, at the last CBSS Ministerial Session in Vihula in May 2025, all Member States agreed that the efforts should be made to strengthen dialogue and cooperation on security, complementing the work done in other relevant organisations, while avoiding unnecessary duplication.

Dear Participants,

Russia's unprecedented and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine has profound implications not only for our region, but for the whole Europe. By the same token, the European support for Ukraine's reconstruction efforts is the best possible investment in our own security and regional stability. It is clear for all countries of the Baltic Sea region that a strong Ukraine with effective state structures and a vibrant economy can serve as the only realistic security guarantee against Russia.

We need to convince Kremlin that we are ready to support Ukraine for as long as it takes. Long-term planning on financial assistance will be crucial. If successfully implemented, Ukraine's reconstruction could be a game-changer across the post-Soviet space. It would not only create new trade and investment opportunities and foster greater regional integration and stability, but also significantly diminish Russia's influence and provide impetus for the future geopolitical competition with Kremlin.

Poland stands as Europe's steadfast shield. We have provided over €25 billion in humanitarian, military, and refugee aid to Ukraine. But reconstruction is not charity – it is strategy. It is smart business for Ukraine, Poland, and Europe. Over 3,000 Polish companies are already rebuilding Ukraine, and Polish exports now makes up 30% of all EU trade with Kyiv. These are bonds of prosperity that strengthen both nations.

Rebuilding Ukraine also means linking it firmly to Europe. That is why we are trying to engage Ukraine, which has an observer status in the CBSS, to as many joint activities as possible.

Dear Colleagues,

Let me also refer briefly to other topics on the agenda of the conference.

As for the new EU budgetary period, I would like to note that although the Commission's proposal does not substantially change the content of the EU policies, it represents a major shift in terms of their implementation and budgetary structure.

Poland considers the proposed budget a good basis for continuing the negotiations. We recognise that flexibility of the EU budget is necessary to respond to unforeseen challenges. At the same time, current proposal of the Commission goes far in this regard, and we believe it must not undermine the key purpose of the MFF, which is to ensure predictability for long-term investments.

In the ongoing negotiation process we will continue to prioritise: Cohesion Policy, the Common Agricultural Policy and certainly defence. As regards the Cohesion Policy, we will defend the role of regions – the local and regional level must not be weakened, as it plays a key role in delivering the EU priorities on the ground. During the negotiations, we will also advocate for special solutions for regions bordering Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, which have faced exceptional challenges since the start of Russia's aggression – not only in terms of security, but also economic and social development.

Dear Participants,

Regional cooperation is vital also with regard to the climate change. We must act beyond divisions not only to prevent climate change but also to adapt to constantly changing climate conditions. However, we must also take into account changing geopolitical realities. The climate goals and commitments agreed by the EU over the last two decades were made in a different economic and geopolitical context. Therefore, future climate actions should take these changing realities into account to much greater extent – consequently, we should be more flexible and willing to review certain solutions.

Finally, the Baltic Sea countries are particularly affected by foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI). Therefore, we need to enhance cooperation to protect Baltic Sea assets and counter hostile disinformation narratives aimed at undermining trust and stability in the region. The societal resilience to FIMI has to be strengthened on different levels, including through local governments who remain closest to everyday life and concerns of the citizens. The EU Civil Society Strategy, aiming to counter FIMI both within the EU and in candidate countries, is a new, supportive instrument here.

Since the regional cooperation is about sharing good practices and experiences, let me tell you about the Polish Resilience Council - a platform to foster cooperation among government institutions, academia, local authorities, civil society organizations, and the private sector. The Council Develops strategic insights, shares best practices, forms recommendations and policy measures to effectively counter this growing threat. Primary objective is to strengthen resilience against foreign disinformation in a whole-of-society-approach.

Maintaining societal resilience was our top priority during PL PRES. In this context, we introduced the concept of the Resilience Council at EU level as well. Stable financial support for civil society organizations builds a secure information environment for our citizens.

We should use every way to increase public awareness of international affairs, promote democratic values, and empower citizens to engage critically with international developments.

Dear Colleagues,

Let me express sincere gratitude to the organizers of this Conference – the Secretariat of the Union of the Baltic Cities as well as the authorities of the city of Słupsk. It is by no means a coincidence that you are meeting there – the Pomorskie Voivodeship has earned through the years a fair share in the regional and macro-regional framework of the Polish foreign policy. Just to mention that the Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region has taken place just last week in Sopot, in the same Voivodeship.

I wish you all very fruitful discussions and enjoyable stay at the beautiful Dolina Charlotty.

Henryka Mościcka-Dendys
Undersecretary of State