

SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

Declaration from the working group on safety and security in the framework of the EC Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region held in Hamburg 3 – 4 February 2009 and facilitated by Mr Gerd Tarand (Estonia) and Ms Maria Bushikina (Russia)

Young people consider safety in many aspects. Safety for young people means that they feel safe wherever they are and whatever they do and have the possibilities to do whatever they choose in a safe manner. Young people expect respect and the rule of law from the police throughout the region and hope to see a consistent balance between liberties and constraints in order to trust the law enforcement. Young people see safety as consisting of a clear and strong basis of social life and society, including social protection and guaranteeing equally safe conditions in the fields of public health, medical assistance and a real, safe home and family for everyone.

They see civil courage, trust and conscience as cornerstones for feeling safe in their communities and regions. They feel that safety is important to guarantee education and education is important to ensure knowledge of safety related issues and should be taken more into focus.

Financial security, human rights including freedom of movement, rule of law, environmental safety, energy security and the creation of new sustainable clean energies are important issues for young people throughout the region and they expect to see them more in focus.

Even if young people feel personally safe, they worry about other vulnerable groups and do not wish to see them exploited by any means by individuals or any organised crime, violent or terror groups. Young people want to live without any fear and wish that all others will be able to do the same. The expectations for a peaceful region where human rights for all are respected, including the freedom of movement, freedom of speech and media, gender balance, the absence of harmful stereotypes and xenophobia and equality and justice in general are strong.

Young people call for more and reliable communication from all stakeholders in order to be informed and included in assuring the safety of youth, other age groups, their communities and the Baltic Sea Region and also propose to emphasize the following actions to improve the safety within the Baltic Sea Region:

- 1) Research into methane gas and development of different clean energy sources like solar, wind and tidal energy;
- 2) Raise awareness on energy sustainability by focusing on this topic at the earliest educational levels and create additional educational programmes to make this possible on all levels by co-operating within the Baltic Sea Region;
- 3) Preventing use of energy as a political means of pressure by creating regional energy links and connections in order to also guarantee political stability;
- 4) Focus on creating more civil courage based on community or regional identities;
- 5) Provide better information on already existing exchange programmes dealing with safety and security and or by creating a common identity within the region in order to improve their chances for success and resources for raising public awareness;
- 6) Focus on improving maritime safety to guarantee the Baltic Sea safety and environment and consider using more pipelines instead of shipping;