

# First Regional Cruise Dialogue for the Baltic

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18 October 2016, Copenhagen

## Conclusions

*Highlighting* the Baltic Sea region as one of the leading tourism destinations in the world and its growth potential in view of the global forecasted demand for travel.

*Recognising* the positive economic and social impact of cruise tourism in the region.

*Acknowledging* the considerable environmental challenges facing the Baltic Sea and the Baltic Sea region, and *committed* to increase joint efforts to limit additional pressures.

*Noting* the increase of cruise tourism in the Baltic Sea region in terms of average number of passengers per call and average number of calls per port.

*Highlighting* the relatively high visitor satisfaction scores with regard to the tourism offer in the Baltic Sea Region.

*Stressing* the opportunities and challenges for ports' capacities in view of the ever growing cruise ships size.

*Confirming* the need to promote integrated solutions based on a comprehensive dialogue between all major participants in the value chain.

*Recognising* the need to define challenges for further integration of the sector and to identify robust benchmarked objectives (roadmap) to overcome these challenges.

*Recognising* the need to promote responsible tourism, respectful of the natural environment, of cultural heritage and of local traditions while at destination.

*Underlining* the fundamental business value aspect of a clean coastal and maritime environment.

*Stressing* the importance of collaboration between cruise operators, ports, destinations and local stakeholders to understand and replicate best practices and utilize available resources to mitigate and minimize negative environmental and social impacts on natural and cultural heritage and resources in the Baltic Sea region.

*Acknowledging* the role of the European Strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime tourism in promoting a structured dialogue between the key stakeholders in cruise tourism in the Baltic Sea region.

The participants to the first Regional Cruise Dialogue for the Baltic have agreed on the following conclusions and suggested way ahead.

## ***On the promotion of destinations***

*Recognized* the contribution of cruise tourism to the local economies and *agreed* to maximise the involvement of local communities in the tourism promotional activity of the region.

Agreed to promote natural and cultural heritage in the Baltic Sea region, as well as local traditions, as a core business value to preserve and develop.

*Recognised* the attractiveness of the Baltic Sea region as a safe and secure destination, in times of global unrest.

*Acknowledged* the importance of good accessibility to destinations and the need to maintain adequate infrastructures to welcome the increasing tourism flows.

*Acknowledged* the need to embrace new technologies to promote cruise tourism in the region, to enable digitalized customer experience and enhance awareness about local assets.

*Encouraged* cruise operators, ports and destinations in the Baltic Sea region to join their efforts to better identify tourists' needs and trends.

*Acknowledged* the need to cooperate in the promotion of cruise tourism in the region by highlighting the region's identity and developing joint branding and communication schemes.

*Reaffirmed* the need for the sector to respond to new challenges arising from different customer groups' needs and an increasingly international and multicultural clientele, while ensuring customized client service and promoting further skills development.

*Encouraged* destinations to maintain an innovative, diversified and adequate tourism offer, providing an integrated link to inland activities.

*Recognised* the added value of shore excursions to increase visitor satisfaction rates and the need to maintain a quality cruise tourism offer both on board of the ship and at the destination.

*Reaffirmed* their intention to build awareness of cruising as a tourism product with high potential among non-EU tourists, particularly from China, by developing attractive thematic packages, and promotion campaigns centered on the region and carried out both in the region and at the source market.

*Agreed*, in particular, to take stock of the actions and events to be rolled out in connection with the EU-China Tourism Year in 2018, proclaimed on July 12, 2016 at the EU-China Summit.

*Stressed* the importance of visa facilitation to attract tourists from non-EU countries, particularly in view of the upcoming EU China Tourism Year in 2018.

## ***On the management of port-/city relations***

*Stakeholders:*

- 1. Recognise that the Baltic is a very attractive tourism destination*
- 2. Have a mutual interest in preserving the “health” of destinations as a main business value*
- 3. Recognise the important economic benefit of cruise tourism in the Baltic*
- 4. Recognise the need to mitigate certain externalities of the sector*
- 5. Recognise that “local cruise fora” gathering representatives of destinations, ports and cruise lines constitute a good practice.*
- 6. Agree that such local cruise fora should be implemented where not yet existing and should be made better known to all relevant stakeholders for effective cooperation.*

*These fora allow discussing aspects such as:*

- a. Understanding mutual roles and responsibilities*
- b. Societal acceptance of the sector*
- c. Political acceptance of the sector*
- d. Defining and coordinating a local vision for cruise tourism and communicating this to the general public*
- e. Sustainable growth*
- f. Environmental issues*
- g. Local boundaries*
- h. Economic benefits*
- i. Efficient and seamless logistics*
- j. Innovative products*
- k. Building products into the history of the city*

### ***On environmental compliance***

*Agreed* to promote a holistic approach for sustainability policy for maritime and coastal tourism in the Baltic Sea region, aiming at mitigating and minimizing the environmental impacts of cruise tourism to local inhabitants, to the marine environment and to air quality.

*Agreed to* work jointly to identify and remove bottlenecks hindering the effective implementation of the Baltic Special Area under MARPOL Annex IV by the agreed timeline 2019/2021, including through sharing of best practice and taking into account the need for timely planning of itineraries.

*Called on* all relevant parties involved in cruise tourism to foster adequate port reception facilities in line with the requirements of Directive 2000/59/EC on port reception facilities for ship generated waste and cargo residues ("the PRF Directive"), as well as the actual use of these facilities for the delivery of ship-generated waste.

*Called on* the consistent and harmonized implementation of the EU environmental legislation as regards the shore-sea interface in terms of waste management and delivery to PRF.

*Stressed* the need for the industry to have a clear and stable regulatory framework to allow for business planning.

*Welcomed* the European Commission's on-going efforts in improving the implementation of the PRF Directive, including recent guidance on the interpretation of the Directive's main provisions, as well as the work towards the revision of the PRF Directive, and called for an active involvement of all stakeholders in the consultation process for the revision.

*Agreed* to explore further initiatives at regional level to promote solutions for implementing the PRF Directive.

*Acknowledged* the efforts of cruise operators, ports and destinations to adapt the waste management procedures and the respective monitoring tools to comply with agreed international and EU regulatory frameworks and policies, in particular the EU Circular Economy Strategy.

*Acknowledged* the need to identify current infrastructural gaps and bottlenecks in the Baltic Sea region and the investment needed thereto.