

5th Conference of the CBSS Ministers of Culture (Copenhagen, 19 Sept. 2001)

Copenhagen declaration

The ministers for Culture of the Baltic Sea States met in Copenhagen on September 18-19, 2001 for their fifth conference.

The ministers expressed their satisfaction with the ongoing cultural co-operation in the Baltic Sea region and the initiatives taken following the fourth conference of Ministers for Culture in Gdansk on September 20-21, 1999.

The ministers agreed that they would continue to give special priority to the co-operation within the Baltic Sea region. They also stressed their wish to relate to cultural co-operation in the region and the work carried out in the EU and multilateral organisations, particularly the Council of Europe and UNESCO. The ministers see the Baltic region as an essential part of the Northern Dimension and welcome initiatives concerning cultural co-operation with neighbouring regions.

The ministers further noted with satisfaction the interest for cultural co-operation expressed by the Council of Baltic Sea States, the Baltic Council of Ministers, the Nordic Council of Ministers as well as the Union of the Baltic Cities, and encouraged co-operation between the different organisations and networks in the area.

The main theme of the conference in Copenhagen was cultural heritage in a broad sense. The ministers stressed the importance of the common cultural heritage as a factor that binds the different countries in the region together. At the same time the diversity and differences of cultural heritage and ongoing projects in the various fields of culture give the different countries close and unique possibilities of multi-cultural co-operation and sustainable cultural tourism in the region.

Cultural Heritage Co-operation

The ministers took note of the progress report on cultural heritage cooperation in the Baltic Sea States given by the Monitoring Group now proceeding in four groups using the specialities in the region:

- Coastal culture and maritime heritage
- Underwater heritage
- Sustainable historic towns
- Building preservation and maintenance in practice

The ministers expressed their wish that the Monitoring Group should continue to guide and consolidate the ongoing work and give its final report of the progress of the cultural heritage co-operation to the ministers at their sixth conference in 2003. This report should as well point out different possibilities to continue the work after 2003.

The ministers expressed their intention to strengthen cooperation on the study of the underwater cultural heritage supporting specific projects etc. They therefore asked the monitoring group to examine the perspectives of co-operation on the protection based on the provisions of the UN convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982.

New Media

The ministers agreed that IT has an important and growing role to play in relation to both preservation and widening of accessibility to movable cultural heritage through digitalisation of cultural objects. The ministers furthermore stressed that there is a special obligation to promote varied, relevant and culturally interesting content on the global nets (eContent).

In this context the ministers noted with interest the development of new media projects for cultural communication and co-operation in the Baltic Sea region. It was also noted with satisfaction that the Baltic Interface Net project now is an operational network with support from all countries.

Some delegations expressed interest in setting up an ad hoc working group on IT and cultural heritage.

Denmark invited interested countries for further discussion on the occasion of the CULT 2001 conference in Copenhagen in October 2001.

Ars Baltica

The ministers took note of the work carried out within the framework of Ars Baltica as an important multilateral body for further development of cultural co-operation in the region.

Funding

The Ministers took note of the need for adequate national and international funding of cultural co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region.

Next meeting

The sixth Conference of Ministers will be held in St. Petersburg in 2003, which then will be celebrating its 300th anniversary.

The preparatory meeting will be held in Helsinki in 2002.