



Statement on Heritage and Cultural Tourism in the Baltic Sea Region IN Vilnius 28 September 2007

Preamble

The Baltic Sea Heritage Cooperation was initiated in 1997 after a decision taken by the Ministers of Culture in the Region. The cooperation takes place in Working groups, which are organized by a Monitoring group, and in regularly gathered FORUMS, to enhance and develop the management of the Cultural Heritage in the Region in a fruitful and sustainable way.

The participants in the 3rd Baltic Sea Region Cultural Heritage Forum that took place in Vilnius, Lithuania 25-28 September 2007, recognize;

- the importance of Cultural Heritage in generating a coherent society and as a vital resource for a prosperous local and regional development in the Baltic Sea Region, irrespective of its location on land, sea or underwater,
- that the diversity of Cultural Heritage of the Baltic Sea Region should be made available to all, and yet used in a sustainable way in order to preserve it for future generations,
- that the Cultural Heritage is an essential asset for Cultural Tourism,
- that the European Union emphasises on its agenda enhancement of sustainable European tourism policies,
- that the existence of international documents like International Cultural Tourism Charter (adopted by ICOMOS in Mexico, 1999) and Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro 2005) are to be looked upon as appropriate guidelines for sustainable Cultural Tourism management.

Underline;

- that in order to release the full potential for tourism based on the Cultural Heritage in the Baltic Sea region, joint strategies for better documentation and protection must be developed by national authorities,
- that cultural tourism activities should enhance living cultural traditions, genuine hand crafts and skills, local pride and public appreciation as well as understanding of cultural heritage sites, and at the same avoid overexploitation,
- that Cultural Heritage management institutions and Tourism organizations need to develop mutual relations in order to share responsibilities and to enhance competent partnerships and governance.

Recommend;

- all States in the Baltic Sea Region to record their Cultural Heritage and make the documentation comprehensible to other Sectors of the society and to the Public at large,
- all States in the Baltic Sea Region to encourage the use of traditional skills and materials in preservation and restoration works, programming constant maintenance of the sites,
- that abandoned Monuments are given new functions for their survival with regard to their cultural values in order to be a resource also in Cultural Tourism,
- Cultural Heritage management and tourism organizations to engage and encourage the interest of the young and children in History and Cultural Heritage,
- creation of cross sector networks between Cultural Heritage and Tourism organizations for developing joint policies and strategies for a diverse, sustainable and prosperous Cultural Tourism and establishing regional cultural routes,
- that politicians at all levels in the Baltic Sea region to recognize the vital role of a well-preserved and diverse Cultural Heritage for a prosperous tourism and consequently for the versatile development of the entire region.