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31 July, 2010, Klaipėda

**Declaration of the Participants and Contributors to the Annual International Summer Academy: EDUCATIO: Institute for Development and Training, Young Christian Democrats of Lithuania, Junge Union Schleswig-Holstein, Riga's region of Youth of Latvian Peoples Party, New Era Youth Section of Latvia, Association Młodzi Demokraci of Poland, Movement for Freedom, Belarus**

We, the Participants and Contributors to the Annual International Summer Academy "Implementation of the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: theory and practice", held in Klaipėda on July 29 – August 1, 2010, hereby declare:

At the end of the first decade of the XXI century the Baltic Sea region faces a wide scope of risks and challenges. They range from environmental to energy security, from economic to underdeveloped transport infrastructure problems. As a consequence, the Baltic Sea region lack appropriate infrastructure to create functional regional energy market, economy is experiencing deep recession, security risks are becoming more worrying, etc.

The Baltic Sea region countries have great potential and available resources for making the area one of the best places to live in the EU. They fully acknowledge the need of working together in order to remove barriers to trade, foster innovations and create internal market. For instance, they cooperate in order to create flexible and attractive transport system, which would make the region better accessible and more attractive for investors. They plan common investments expecting to lower energy supply risks.

However, it seems that the above mentioned efforts are not sufficient: ambitions are high, but the region is too much divided to reach the aims successfully. Therefore, new impetus is needed in order to accelerate the implementation of common objectives. This could be the creation of a system or a governance structure which would define how to achieve agreements in preventing pollution, developing transport infrastructure, doing maritime and land-based spatial planning (BEMIP being an example of such cooperation agreement). This system would create a functional division of labour, decide on leading institutions at the same time allowing the Baltic Sea region countries to participate in decision making and implementation process.

We believe that the crucial role in this regard should play the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. This Strategy identifies the most immediate problems which the region faces in environmental, economy, infrastructure, safety and security areas. Therefore, the EU Strategy has a potential for creating a more coordinated approach towards common work for the Baltic Sea

region's future. In other words, the successful implementation of the Strategy and better use of the EU funds could make the Baltic Sea region more environmentally sustainable, prosperous, accessible, attractive and secure.

We hope the European Commission will pay a proper attention towards the implementation of this Strategy in order to make it a powerful instrument used for further strengthening of the regional integration. Implementation of the Strategy will deliver real benefits for every Baltic Sea region's country and for the Baltic Sea region as a whole.

Hereby we also want to stress that the success of the EU Strategy depends not only on the support from the highest political levels in the Baltic Sea region's countries but also on the effective monitoring system and involvement of civil society and business sector. We are convinced that the EU and its regional institutions should tightly collaborate with neighbouring countries like Belarus and Norway during the realization of the EU Strategy. We also hope that Russia, as a natural key actor in the Baltic Sea region, will be successfully incorporated in this process as well.

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