



VI Conference of the Baltic Sea States' Ministers of Culture in Saint-Petersburg, December 2003

*3rd December 2003
Saint-Petersburg,
Russian Federation*

Saint-Petersburg Declaration

The Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea States met in Saint-Petersburg on December 2-3, 2003 for their 6th Conference.

The theme of the Conference was "Protected Areas of Historical Cities and Specific Factors of their Existence in Big Cities". The Ministers noted that the preservation of the cultural heritage in historical cities is becoming now a common task for the states of the Baltic Sea region.

The Ministers expressed their satisfaction with the ongoing cultural cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, which was founded in Saltjobaden in 1993, and the initiatives taken following the 5th Conference of the Ministers of Culture in Copenhagen on September 18-19, 2001.

The Ministers agreed that they would continue cultural cooperation within the Baltic Sea region in coordination with the European Union, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the Nordic Council of Ministers and other international organizations on the background of i.e. the Northern Dimension Plan. They also agreed that thus they would help to create conditions for sustainable development of historical cities, for the preservation and restoration of the monuments of architecture and town-planning.

The Ministers stressed the necessity of common efforts of the institutions for the preservation of monuments and municipal authorities in their countries to protect the big cities' historical and cultural areas.

The Ministers considered worthwhile to continue the dialogue concerning the problems of town-planning and preservation of cultural heritage in historical cities and towns of the Baltic Sea States.

The Ministers recommended to prepare proposals for the programme of international cooperation concerning the town-planning and preservation of cultural heritage in historical cities.

The Ministers considered archives, libraries and museums as important sources of information, learning and education and work tools for the development of historical cities.

The Ministers expressed satisfaction of the Monitoring Group's report and thanked Sweden for chairing the Monitoring group over the past six years. The Ministers asked the Monitoring Group to continue, guide and consolidate the ongoing work of the cultural heritage cooperation.

The Ministers took note of the importance of the Baltic Sea Cultural Heritage Forum in Gdansk and supported the idea of arranging such forums in future.

The Ministers encouraged the Monitoring group to examine the possibilities of cooperation on the protection of the underwater cultural heritage in the Baltic Sea.

The Ministers stressed the importance of creating and reinforcing the cultural infrastructure, in particular the informational infrastructure as a necessity for integration and intercultural communication.

The Ministers took note of the project idea of the General Art Portal in the Internet for the Baltic Sea Region, and the idea of organizing the Baltic Sea Festival under the patronage of the Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea States.

The Ministers noted with satisfaction the progress in activity of the Ars Baltica, which has contributed to the development of the dialogue and the cultural expressions between the Baltic countries. The Ars Baltica is successfully promoting multilateral workshops, festivals, exhibitions and concerts. The Ministers took note of the importance of the Ars Baltica Forum in Visby and supported the idea of realizing similar forums.

The 7th Conference of Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea States will be held in Norway in 2005 and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany) will be hosting the preparatory meeting.