

Dear friends of the Baltic Sea Region,

The South Baltic Programme invites to its conference:

“Towards a prosperous cross-border maritime community: retrospections, milestones and prospects”

Szczecin | 26th November 2013 | 10:00 – 18:30 | Maritime Academy Szczecin | Poland

Sense of cross-border community, good practice exchange, new market perspectives, joint solutions for common challenges and collective efforts to seize opportunities – these are all aspects that come about as a result of co-operation across borders, and pave the way for prosperity, sustainability and integrity of our regions.

In keeping with this spirit, 69 initiatives have led to close cooperation ties between the Baltic Sea coastal regions of Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden over the last few years. Supported by the South Baltic Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013, municipalities, cities, regions, business organisations, transport operators, universities, NGOs and many other institutions have formed a cross-border community of neighbours around the South Baltic region, dedicated to boost local development through an intensive exchange of experience, the transfer of good practices as well as the joint development and testing of innovative solutions.

On 26 November 2013, the South Baltic Programme organises a conference designed to reflect on the impact made by these initiatives helping local communities to prosper and grow together across borders. The cross-border footprint is evident in a large number of societal fields including local governance, healthcare, labour market, economics, environment and energy, science and education, culture and tourism. Undoubtedly, the cross-border co-operation has become an indispensable practice to tap potentials, seize opportunities and tackle challenges which will be highlighted during a panel discussion with local politicians including **Mayor Piotr Krzystek of Szczecin** (Poland), **Council President Viveca Olofsson of Sölvesborg** (Sweden), **Mayor Vytautas Grubliauskas of Klaipėda** (Lithuania) and **Councillor Per Ole Peterson of Bornholm** (Denmark).

With the new European multiannual financial framework 2014-2020 appearing on the horizon, a subsequent panel discussion in Szczecin will outline the future prospects of cross-border co-operation in the South Baltic regions with guests including **Adam Zdzieblo, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Regional Development** (Poland), **Jane Strange Nielsen from the Region Zealand Growth Forum** (Denmark), **Stefan Rudolph, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Economics, Construction and Tourism of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern** (Germany), **Akko Karlsson, Vice-President of the Board at the Regional Council of Kalmar County** (Sweden) and **Thomas Lantz, 1st Vice-President of the Regional Council of Region Skåne** (Sweden).

Being part of a bigger European programme family, the South Baltic Programme is pleased to also welcome **Normunds Popens, Deputy Director-General for Implementation at the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy**, who will outline the layout of the new generation of European Territorial Co-operation programmes.

The conference offers a unique opportunity to tangibly experience the spirit of cross-border co-operation, exchange with the pioneers of a prosperous maritime community stretching across borders, and get inspired to embark on future joint efforts to support and advocate the cross-border values.

The registration is open until the 18th November 2013. To register, please access the following address:

http://en.southbaltic.eu/__sb_annual_conference_2013__/

The conference programme is available at: www.southbaltic.eu

For further information, please refer to: Mr Vassilen Iotzov of the Joint Technical Secretariat, Tel: +48 58 746 38 55, email: vassilen.iotzov@southbaltic.eu