The past year has brought new challenges globally in the light of new political uncertainties, increased global economic competition, and a rapidly changing business climate. It is more important than ever to look for regional solutions. Today, we will discuss how the Baltic Sea Region responds to these developments, and how we can learn from each other as one of the most dynamic regions of the world.

As a leading regional think-tank, BDF is proud to publish new insightful analyses about the development of the Baltic Sea Region. We hope our publications will help to promote the region internationally and provide decision-makers, both private and public, with new perspectives for the future.

We also wish that the analyses will serve as a basis for well-informed decision-making in governments and businesses in all the eleven countries in the region and thus provide inspiration for an even closer regional cooperation.

On the Summit programme for this year, you will find BDF signature topics such as innovation and competitiveness side by side with new initiatives and perspectives. With this year’s more focused Summit format, we hope that you will enjoy the discussions.

Baltic Sea cooperation is a priority for Denmark. Our goal is to tie the Baltic Sea Region together in an ever stronger cooperation between all Baltic Sea States – on all relevant political and economic issues. To achieve this, we are active in all fora dedicated to Baltic Sea cooperation such as the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and the EU-strategy for the Baltic Sea region (EUSBSR).

Denmark is also engaged in other regional cooperation platforms. This year, Denmark holds the presidency of the cooperation within the Nordic-Baltic group of countries (NB8). Within the four focus areas identified by Denmark: Ukraine crisis, strategic communication/Thurian language media, energy security, and the Eastern Partnership – the NB8-countries have identified grounds for new initiatives and achieved concrete results.

We are happy that Baltic Development Forum (BDF) is hosting its 17th Baltic Development Forum (BDF) Summit in Copenhagen to discuss “Europe-wide challenges, regional solutions”. BDF is a key actor in Baltic Sea cooperation and its role as an important think tank is well known across the region. For the Summit, BDF has once again put together a program for discussions focused on the most vital issues facing the Baltic Sea region at this point in time. I would like to congratulate BDF on that.

2015 has been a challenging year in our region, like the year before. The conflict in Ukraine has altered the security situation in Europe as well as in the Nordic-Baltic region. In this context, Nordic-Baltic cooperation in the NB8 format and elsewhere has demonstrated its value in changing times. We are determined in a number of ways and we promote our policies and priorities.

The BDF Summit will no doubt give valuable input as to how we meet present and future challenges affecting the region. I wish you all a successful and productive Summit!
15:10 Baltic Sea Region today and in the future

Video message from Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, Honorary Chairman, Baltic Development Forum

Interactive session with the audience. What are your visions for the Baltic Sea Region?

15:30 Coffee

16:00 Challenges and Game Changers

What defines the Baltic Sea Region in 2015, and where will it be in ten years’ time? We will look closer at the region’s biggest challenges and game changers that pave the way for the future.

Presentation: Paweł Świeboda, Deputy Head, European Political Strategy Centre, European Commission

Panel discussion: The Baltic Sea Region today and in the future

Jüri Luik, Director, International Center for Defense and Security, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia

Robert Nurick, Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council

Arkady Moshes, Programme Director, The EU’s Eastern Neighbourhood and Russia Research Programme, Finnish Institute of International Affairs

Moderator: Per Carlsen, Senior Advisor BDF

17:00 Conclusions and Reflections

How can we keep the political commitment to the Baltic Sea cooperation? How will the regional organisations follow up on challenges and opportunities for the future?

Dagfinn Høybråten, Secretary General, Nordic Council of Ministers

Henryka Moscicka-Dendys, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the Kingdom of Denmark, CBSS Polish Presidency

Kaspars Ozoliņš, Latvian Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark, NB8 Latvian Chairmanship 2016

Lena Andersson Pench, Director DG Regio, European Commission

Moderators: Emily Wise, Research fellow, Lund University,

Lene Espersen, Chairman, Baltic Development Forum

17:30 Mingle

After the formal programme ends, join us for a drink and some food at an evening mingle at Eigtveds Pakhus.