



How to promote mobility for students and researchers in the Baltic Sea Region – Strategic and innovative mobility

Conference, 23 November 2010, Copenhagen, Denmark

sponsored by
the Advisory Body for the Nordic Council of Ministers on higher education (HØGUT)

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Introduction

The conference on how to promote mobility for students and researchers in the Baltic Sea Region served two purposes.

First of all, the conference was part of the Danish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers (2010). The issue of mobility was regarded to be of key importance by the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Technology of Denmark. HØGUT, the Advisory Committee on Higher Education for the Nordic Council of Ministers¹ also found an interest in supporting the subject and therefore provided the financial means that allowed the conference to be organised. HØGUT is a key player in strengthening and developing Nordic cooperation in the field of education, including higher education. HØGUT is also responsible for the educational action scheme *NORDPLUS* which aims to promote quality and innovation in the education systems in the Nordic and Baltic countries by supporting mobility, intensive courses and networking².

Secondly, the conference served the purpose of implementing a flagship project within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The Action Plan of the strategy includes the following project: To “Identify barriers hampering mobility of researchers and students in the Baltic Sea Region and enhance cooperation in the Region in the area of mobility” (the so-called “Fifth Freedom”)³. The project is part of the chapter on education. Denmark has taken the responsibility of this project.

In the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy, the European Commission has also developed a set of policies aiming at creating well educated and skilled professionals who will be able to take the economic development of Europe forward. The primary goal is to link education providers and industry in order to guarantee that today’s skills will match future needs of companies. Skills and talent are crucial for ensuring the long-term competitiveness of Europe and the Commission also mentions that it is key for promoting social cohesion, since it will help all citizens in the EU to benefit from the more and better jobs on offer. ⁴ The Europe 2020 objectives are setting a useful point of reference to the endeavours within the regional strategy.

On this basis, the aim of the conference was to identify some of the structural problems hindering the mobility in the Baltic Sea Region and to identify ways of addressing the problems. In the understanding of the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, mobility should be *strategic* in terms of drawing business and universities closer together and *innovative* as it should lead to the spreading of knowledge and new ideas across sectors and across national borders.

1 Nordic Council of Ministers: <http://www.norden.org/en/nordic-council-of-ministers/council-of-ministers/nordic-council-of-ministers-for-education-and-research-mr-u/advisory-groups/advisory-group-for-nordic-co-operation-on-higher-education-hogut>.

2 Nordic eScience Action Plan10 concrete actions to implement the Nordic eScience Strategy, 2008: p. 7. Available at: Danish center for Scientific Computing (2011): www.dsc.dk/.../Nordic_eScience_Action_Plan__10_concrete_actions_to_implement_the_Nordic_eScience_Strategy.pdf.

3 European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Annex I Summary of Implementations, Commission of the European Communities, 2010: p. 81. Available at: European Commission (2011): http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/baltic/tallinn_14102010_en.htm.

4 European Commission (2011): http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/themes/education/index_en.htm.

Approximately 80 decision-makers, representatives of business, higher education institutions, including university rectors and students were invited to share information, discuss best practices and explore new ideas and actions for boosting mobility of students and researchers in the Baltic Sea Region (see conference programme in annex). The general peer-learning perspective of the conference should in itself contribute to better cooperation in the region.

The present report summarizes the presentations and discussions that took place at the Copenhagen conference which included a business panel and a university panel. It also reports to EU partners on the outcome of the project. The report is made by Baltic Development Forum (BDF) who was a co-organiser of the conference. The conclusions and the recommendations presented reflect the views and understanding of BDF and not necessarily the Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Technology. BDF hopes that the recommendation will be taken into account by other projects of the EU Strategy of the Baltic Sea Region as well as of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Also the recommendations should be reviewed as part of the further development and updating of the strategy in the field of talents and higher education.

Conclusions and recommendations

Generally, the conference reflected an overall agreement that strategic actions have to be taken on national, regional and European levels in order to increase the mobility of students and researchers. Mobility is seen as a way of raising the level of qualifications, providing a more dynamic labour market and creating freer movement of ideas. The two main messages from the conference were that mobility is key to:

1. *innovation* which again contributes to sustainable economic growth
2. *preparing* students to the higher demands of the job market for talents

The business panel of the conference highlighted the growth agenda in particular: The global competitive pressures are key factors in demanding higher qualification and increased mobility in Europe. The university panel underlined the need to see mobility in a broader context where interregional university cooperation was important. Both parties recognized, however, the need for a close inter-sector cooperation between business and higher education institutions in order to enhance innovation, but also to smooth transitions of students from student life to work life.

The main difference between the business and university representatives was their view on the right and ability to influence the future research directions of the universities. The business sector underlined the need for more strategic research and for a better understanding of the needs and challenges of the private sector, whereas the university representatives called for free research: No one knows the challenges of tomorrow and therefore focus on today's needs often stands in the way of developing tomorrow's technologies/knowledge. The business panel pointed out the necessity of ensuring mobility between the private sector and research environments at universities in order to increase competitiveness.

On the basis of the interventions and discussion, the following *conclusions* can be identified:

1. Mobility is an important concept for future development of universities in the region, for cross-sector exchange of talents and for the business sectors' demand for qualified personnel.
2. The concept is, however, multifaceted and there is a need for clarifications of the different aspects of mobility.
3. Precise data on mobility of students and researchers in the region is lacking.
4. Initiatives for regional cooperation in the field are prepared by the EU and Nordic Council of Ministers, whereas fewer initiatives stem directly from the Baltic Sea Region cooperation.

- 5 There is a need for establishing better structures for cooperation between the business sector and the university and research sector in order for the Baltic Sea Region countries to remain competitive. Academia and industry need to overcome both mental and structural barriers in order to establish better cooperation.
6. Regional initiatives and conferences similar to the present one could help overcome the current obstacles.

Although the conference participants did not agree on all topics, a number of *recommendations* and concrete action points can be identified:

1. There is a need to keep focus on credit mobility. Despite efforts to align systems between the countries, students and graduates are still faced with difficulties of achieving recognition of their education and work experience from other countries. Figures show that student mobility has decreased during the economic crisis.
2. The need to establish structures for ensuring that the demand for present and future knowledge and skills can be met to a higher extend. One way could be to introduce *recruitment panels*, where representatives of the business sector are heard in matters regarding changes in study programmes and strategic focus areas of universities.
3. The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region sets a good framework for improving regional cooperation within the Baltic Sea Region on mobility and issues related to the 5th freedom, but the next steps have to be identified in order to ensure their further developed within this structure. The topic of mobility has enjoyed support in political statements, but actions on the ground are yet to demonstrate that there is political will to solve the complex issues related to mobility.
4. The Baltic Sea Region cooperation could find inspiration from the Nordic cooperation in particular regarding the establishment of an ICT based knowledge infrastructure in the Baltic Sea Area, which is one way of increasing the mobility of research and knowledge. This could be done by extending the Nordic e-science strategy to the Baltic Sea Region. The Nordic Council of Ministers is working on establishing a "Knowledge Infrastructure for the Fifth Freedom in the Baltic Sea Area". This could be adopted as a new flagship project under the EU Strategy.
5. The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region serves as a good platform for making better use of EU's different programmes and initiatives for the benefit of the region. A driver for progress in mobility could also be the major research and science project in the region such as ESS (European Spallation Source centre).

Summary of Presentations and Discussions

1. Opening Statements

The conference was introduced by **Mikael Lindholm**, *Director of Innovation Inside and conference moderator*, who stressed the importance of handling the possibilities and challenges posed by the global economy. He underlined the need to enhance the capacity to produce and deploy world class knowledge. The Baltic Sea Region is known to have a well-educated workforce but today the world economy is producing talent and knowledge faster than at any other point in the history of mankind. This is especially due to the rise of the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) with China rapidly becoming a major, if not the dominating, supplier of research, development and talent. The important question is whether the societies are able to match this impressive build-up of talent and knowledge outside the Baltic Sea Region. As part of setting the scene, Mikael Lindholm stressed that if the workforce and research of the region was not sufficiently qualified to face global competitiveness, businesses would move their activities elsewhere.



The conference was officially opened by **Charlotte Sahl-Madsen**, *Danish Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation*, who underlined the importance of promoting mobility of students and researchers as a key for further supporting cooperation and knowledge in the region, which were emphasised as the means for growth and prosperity. The economy of the Baltic Sea Region amounts to 1/6th of the EU economy with its 11 nations representing more than 16 million

inhabitants, indicating that the region collectively has a sufficient and critical mass. The Minister further noted that the region was full of opportunities and resources needed to accelerate the fifth freedom (the free movement of knowledge). The fifth freedom is complementary to the further establishment of the four freedoms within the EU (the free movement of people, capital, goods and services). The Minister stressed that both universities and employers had a common interest and responsibility in advancing the fifth freedom, and that both need to work together in a dynamic environment to facilitate the transfer of knowledge.

Hans Brask, *Director of Baltic Development Forum*, highlighted the European Spallation Source (ESS) centre as a true flagship project of the region. The centre is due to open in Lund, Sweden in 2013. If this project is going to be a success, the issues of flexibility and mobility of students and researchers will be crucial. Promising cross-border projects such as the ESS would attract foreign researchers and improve the excellence in science and research in our part of Europe. Optimal framework conditions for students, researchers and knowledge workers are important as means of improving the region's competitiveness. He recommended that a strong relationship between the Europe 2020 strategy and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region should be established. If the Nordic and the Baltic Sea countries are to be successful in global competition, mobility has to increase as a means of creating innovation.



2. The Current Trends of Student and Researcher Mobility in the Region

Birger Hendriks, *Head of Department for Sciences from the Ministry of Science, Economic Affairs and Transport of the State of Schleswig-Holstein, Bologna Follow Up Group*, presented the current situation of student and researchers' mobility in the region. Birger Hendriks presented statistical data on mobility trends (also described in the annex) in Europe and Baltic Sea Region in particular, indicating that mobility was expressed in various forms. Although the statistical data on mobility in the region was limited, Mr. Hendriks thought the following trends in student mobility could be observed by using the limited data available: The overall trend in mobility shows a decline due to the negative consequences of the recent financial crisis: student mobility for one or two semesters amongst the NORDPLUS⁵ countries decreased substantially between

⁵ NORDPLUS Higher Education (2011): http://www.nordplusonline.org/eng/higher_education/about_nordplus_higher_education.

2006 and 2008. Only “express mobility” (shorter student mobility lasting less than one month but more than one week) had doubled during this period.

Statistically the region shows geographical disproportion in the number of outgoing and incoming students. Thus, in the Western part of the Baltic Sea Region the rate of outgoing students is lower than the number of incoming students: Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are “importers” of students. However, in the Baltic States, the trend used to be opposite but due to the financial crisis, the number of outgoing students is decreasing. Nevertheless, Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania still continues to “export” students to the region.

3. European Commission’s Actions and Plans on Fostering Mobility

Sophia Eriksson Waterschoot, *Head of Sector for Higher Education Policy in DG Education and Culture, the European Commission*, brought the latest information from Brussels about what actions were being implemented by the Commission in order to build competitive, knowledge-based societies. Sophia Eriksson Waterschoot emphasised that the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region could help enhance mobility in the Baltic Sea Region as well as provide coordinated actions in a wide range of policy areas. She continued that the EU “flagship initiatives” aimed at creating a solid ground for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth by linking education and employment for young people. The speaker further noted that this was a very important issue on the EU agenda in light of the fact that Europe’s future development depended on its 100 million young people. Therefore, Europe should quickly solve the high unemployment rates of young people, and create conditions for an increasing number of people with higher education degrees, since up to 35% of all jobs in the very near future would require high level qualifications. Learning should be a lifelong process for European citizens. Furthermore, education and training should always remain crucial factors in the long term perspective of the European Union.

In order to improve mobility trends within Europe, to create frameworks for recognition of all levels of education and non-formal learning, to improve the attractiveness of higher education in Europe, to boost employment of young specialists and decrease high rates of youth unemployment, the European Commission has introduced four action lines⁶. They are a part of the “Youth on the Move” Program⁷ which is an integrated strategy ensuring better transition between education and further employment. Sophia Eriksson Waterschoot also mentioned that conferences such as this one could be considered an element in building knowledge and promoting evidence-based youth policy. Apart from the “Youth on the Move” Program there are a number of other initiatives, programs and actions⁸ in the field of EU Youth Policy, which involve mobility as a key factor, showing how high the concerns regarding mobility are on the EU agenda.

⁶ “Modern education and training systems”, “Higher education”, “Learning and employment mobility”, “Youth Employment Framework”. Available at: www.education2010.be/.../Sophia-Eriksson-Waterschoot_From-the-Green-Paper-on-learning-mobility-to-Youth-on-the-move.ppt

⁷ Youth on the Move. A guide to the rights of mobile students in the European Union. European commission (2011). Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/yom/wpguidance_en.pdf. Youth on the Move webpage: http://europa.eu/youthonthemove/index_en.htm.

⁸ NORDPLUS Higher Education (2011): http://www.nordplonline.org/eng/higher_education/about_nordplus_higher_education.

4. Views of the Panels

After the introductions and factual presentations, the Business and the University Panel were asked to discuss the challenges of student and researcher mobility in the Baltic Sea Region. The **Business Panel**, comprised of various high-level business representatives, expressed their visions on how to define the skills and competences needed in the labour market of today and tomorrow as well as how to attract the brightest talents to the region. The **University Panel**, represented by academics and students, provided information about existing mobility programs and strategies that aim at broadening cooperation between universities and business, and securing the employability of university graduates and researchers.

a) The Business Panel

The members of the business panel all agreed that a very high quality of higher education institutions both locally and regionally was essential in ensuring the competitiveness of their companies. However, it was clear to the panel that although they saw the development of a skilled talent base locally and regionally as a joint public-private responsibility, they faced a reality, with increased competitiveness among knowledge-intensive companies and an increasing highly skilled talent base in developing countries such as China and India. This fact was most strongly underlined by **Børge Diderichsen**, *Vice President and Head of Corporate Research Affairs at Novo Nordisk* - a company with a traditionally strong Nordic identity, but an increasingly global, especially Asian research staff. The company has recently expanded its R&D facilities in China. He summed up the challenge for the Baltic Sea Region in one sentence, by saying "The unpleasant fact is that Scandinavian students have to compete with top trained Chinese in order to get the best jobs".

However, Børge Diderichsen stressed that a strong regional and local talent base is still a priority for Novo Nordisk and they will continue to support this as they have so far.

In the face of this challenge, the panel sent a strong message about innovation as a key factor to strengthening the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region. **Marie Kingston**, *Vice President for Human Resources Development at COWI*, pointed out that the increasing competition from non-European companies demanded readiness for constant change and adaptability from the perspective of both the employee and the employer. Innovative thinking and flexibility still remained the most important features for an employee in the knowledge-intensive sector. Mobility was essential to enhance of innovativeness in the region and several members of the panel suggested thinking about mobility in broader terms than just mobility across borders.

Claus Hviid Christensen⁹, *Chief Executive Officer of Lindoe Offshore Renewable Center (LORC)*, drawing on his experience from a successful career in the business sector and as a scientist, believed that mobility between sectors, rather than mobility across borders, could make a real difference in increasing the competitiveness of the Region. He believed that "innovation

⁹ Shortly after the conference Claus Hviid Christensen was appointed Chairman for the Danish Council for Research Policy by the Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology.



and the ability to innovate is the only lasting competitive edge. In technology-based businesses, the most valuable competence is “scientific innovation ability”, i.e. the ability to create business opportunities from science. On the other hand the research environments in the Baltic Sea region badly needed input from the private sector in order to secure that their research was moving in the right direction. With the sentence “You cannot develop the solutions of tomorrow, if you don’t know the challenges of today”, he stressed that the competitiveness of tomorrow depended on the possibilities of scientists and innovators to move between business and academia and vice versa to a much larger extent than today.

The importance of mobility of knowledge between sectors was also highlighted by **Christoph Anz**, *Director of Education Policy in BMW Group*. The *BMW Group* has a strong focus on internships as a means to ensuring mobility of knowledge and offers 4000 internships to students yearly. Christoph Anz proposed a long term perspective on mobility – mobility should start during student life, which would provide graduates with “flexible brains” for the job market. At the same time from a strategic point of view, universities should receive inflow of industry and business employees in order to ensure that practical knowledge is transferred to education institutions.

It was important, however, not to forget the importance of mobility across borders as an important way for young people to gain international experience, which was a point also stressed by **Emil Görnerup**, *Director Research Policy from Confederation of Swedish Enterprise*. Such experiences were essential and a good way to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, as well as an ability to think outside of the box and provide new fresh ideas, Emil Görnerup and Christoph Anz agreed.

During the questions and answers session, other barriers hindering mobility were discussed. Some of the most important hindrances to mobility mentioned were firstly, difference in educational standards in universities in the Baltic Sea Region. Secondly, the fact that many professors have lost their touch with the trends of today's industry and thirdly, that barriers existed to exchange students wishing to find internship and jobs, as local companies did not see foreign students as a potential labour force for the Baltic Sea region.

However, participants inspired common hope that the region could play a bigger role in the future. To achieve positive results, stakeholders should exchange experience. Some good examples were presented on how to promote better linkage between education and business. Denmark has a successful example in the form of Industrial Fellowship Program where the state pays 50% of the salary for a young specialist. Other mechanisms to overcome obstacles in mobility were mentioned, for example, strong support to education establishments from business and industry by providing more internships and placing researchers and professors into companies and industries.

Summing up, the business panel highlighted the challenges facing the Baltic Sea Region in competition vis-à-vis other regions – particularly the emerging economies of Asia – and that a strong focus on research and innovation is crucial in order to remain a competitive region in the years to come. Moreover, an enhanced cooperation between the public and private sector is needed. Finally, increased mobility and flexibility was key in improving the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region.

b) The University Panel

The university panel looked at the issue of mobility in the Baltic Sea Region from a somewhat different perspective than the business panel. Panel presentations were mostly focused on student mobility between universities rather than mobility between universities and business. However, at the questions and answers session the university panellists were asked to discuss some of the issues which the business panel had taken up and the discussion showed that the complexity of the issue of mobility has deepened by the difference of approach to the topic in the two sectors.

In terms of student mobility between universities the panellists disagreed on whether the Baltic Sea Region offered sufficient opportunities for students and researchers to be mobile. **Rimantas Vaitkus**, *Associate Professor and Vice Rector for International Relations of Vilnius University, Lithuania*, thought that the regional cooperation between the Nordic and the Baltic States was well functioning and provided a good regional environment in which to increase mobility. However, there existed hindrances for students to move freely between universities as well as to be employed by companies in other countries. Differences in curricula and study plans of universities make it difficult for students to achieve recognition of their knowledge and skills both in terms of moving to universities in other countries and in terms of finding employment in other countries.



These obstacles and the need to cover the lack of practical experience of graduates were also touched in the presentation of **Maria Mendel**, *Professor and Pro-Rector for Educational Matters of the University of Gdansk, Poland*. The speaker stressed the significance of the “the triple helix” approach (coordination between business, universities and government) as a goal to build better working relationships. Both Rimantas Vaitkus and Maria Mendel agreed that more efficient partnership and network among universities are needed¹⁰.

Henrik Wolff, *Rector of Arcada University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki, Finland*, agreed that Nordic and Baltic cooperation networks functioned quite well locally. However, the speaker pointed out the importance of expanding these networks in order to cover the whole Baltic Sea Region. From the speaker’s point of view, mobility was impeded because the academic systems of Baltic Sea Region countries were diverse. In that way employability for graduates became more difficult as qualification and specialization criteria were limited to national standards.

Mati Heidmets, *Professor and former Rector of Tallinn University, Chairman of the Evaluation Board of Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency in Estonia*, stated that all Baltic Sea Region countries should have a clearer vision on mobility with a key point to motivate students not to be afraid to start their career path in other countries. State support, as for example the current Estonian governmental Growth Strategy, was essential in creating more favourable conditions for international students in order to attract them to local work markets. Such actions could help to align the misbalance of in - and outgoing students in the Baltic Sea Region.

¹⁰ As a good example Baltic University Program was mentioned. Homepage: <http://www.balticuniv.uu.se>.

The employability of students was also the focus the presentation of **Allan Päll** *Vice-Chairperson of European Students' Union (ESU)*. One of the major concerns of the students of Europe is the growth of unemployment due to a big divide between universities and industry which currently represent "two different mind sets". Obstacles to mobility are not removed as fast as is needed because of the differences in attitudes of business and higher education with regard to knowledge competences. Nevertheless, students view increased mobility as a means to fight that. Allan Päll stressed the need for innovative modernization of traditional academic tools, for example broader use of modern communication tools. The speaker called for the stakeholders to apply long-term employability perspectives. He urged them to start thinking strategically about employability and about using a life-long learning approach, which was very much in line with some of the suggestions from the business panel.

During the questions and answers session, the difference in attitudes of business and higher education which Allan Päll was talking about was exemplified when Christoph Anz from the business panel asked "how universities use mobility for ensuring employability of graduates?" He also asked the university panellists how study programs reflect today's needs of the market. Rimantas Vaitkus responded that universities first of all should be perfect in research and ensure research freedom in order to predict market needs for the future. In his opinion the universities would be in danger of failing if they limited themselves to following today's market demands.

Allan Päll argued that a modernization and change of universities could be provoked from the inside by creating international study environments and boosting exchange programs both between universities and companies. This thought found solid support among participants: thus, Christine Jakobsson, Director of Baltic University Programme, put forward the idea that there should be a closer cooperation with Russia, Belarus and Ukraine if the Baltic Sea Region wanted to become an influential player on a macro-national level and to be competitive on the world market.

The participants agreed that the Baltic Sea Region needed a strong brand, which could make the region known and recognizable in other parts of the world. The work, research and welfare of students and graduates could be one element in branding the region. At the same time, it was pointed out that it is very important to find a balance between empowering the region's smart resources and attracting talents to the region.

5. Closing Remarks

The overall message from the conference was summed up by *Gard Titlestad, Head of Department of Knowledge and Welfare, Nordic Council of Ministers*.

From the presentations and discussions at the conference, Gard Titlestad concluded that many of the hindrances to the mobility of students and researchers in the Baltic Sea Region are connected to differences in mindset between the countries of the region and between the sectors

involved in and benefitting from mobility. A strong commitment to free movement of knowledge was needed.

To overcome these hindrances he also noted the importance of events such as this conference in helping to turn the vision of mobility into substance and to share experiences of public-private partnerships as an engine for boosting the knowledge triangle (education, science and innovation).

Additionally, Gard Titlestad underlined that increased mobility will be an important factor in the development of a brand for the Baltic Sea Region. A strong brand is important for attracting human capital, deepening regional market integration, linking labour market supply and demand and voicing the specific value of the Baltic Sea Region.

He concluded that the best platforms for mobility and innovation are:

- openness,
- transparency,
- diversity,
- a low level of hierarchy,
- freedom of ideas
- democracy.

The questions of mobility and ways to strengthen research-environments and knowledge intensive industries have been high on the agenda of the Nordic Council of Ministers for a number of years already and the experience from working with these questions back up the conclusions from the conference. As examples of forward oriented initiatives he mentioned first the Top Level Research Initiative - a grand challenge joint programming initiative on climate change, environment and energy. Second, Knowledge Triangle Networks - university-driven networks to fuel increased knowledge exchange and innovation in the region, the Nordic Masters initiative and finally the Nordplus programme.

Apart from summing up the outcome of the conference, Gard Titlestad could in his capacity of Head of Department of Knowledge and Welfare within the Nordic Council of Ministers provide a useful way forward for some of the topics brought up at the conference. The creation of an infrastructure for the fifth freedom, also mentioned by the Danish Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation in her opening speech, by means of Baltic Sea Region networks, digital services and especially eScience was a priority area for the Nordic Council of Ministers. A strategy for creating effective knowledge-sharing mechanisms based on ICT-infrastructure was under development. It could prove to be an important vehicle for enhancing the fifth freedom in the Baltic Sea Region. Mobility was an engine for innovation and growth and the digital internal market had been recognised as one of the main driving forces in enhancing growth in the knowledge-intensive Baltic Sea Region. Therefore the creation of a common knowledge

infrastructure for science and innovation using the most advanced ICT technology was a means of paving the way for elements of the fifth freedom.

The Nordic Council of Ministers had already taken the first concrete step towards establishing such an infrastructure by inviting the other countries around the Baltic Sea to consider establishing a joint Knowledge Infrastructure for the Fifth Freedom, building on high capacity networks, supercomputing and eScience. It was the first step to build Baltic Ring.

On this note, Gard Titlestad concluded with a quote that should guide all decision makers working in both the academic and business sphere: “We need to do more – but we also need to know more”.

Conference moderator **Mikael Lindholm**, closed the conference by addressing the issue of competitiveness of the region once again. He stressed the importance of fast decisions and the ability of execution in the global economy. China and other new market economies that all the Baltic Sea Region countries are increasingly competing with, have non-democratic government systems, enabling fast decision-making that allows them to build competitive positions, such as world leading research centres and educational institutions, faster than the traditional democratic governments of Europe. It is imperative that we develop new executive skills and methods as societies. Creating an infrastructure that enhances the fifth freedom in the Baltic Sea Region is an excellent opportunity to develop and test this capability.

Annex. Conference Programme and Background Information



How to promote mobility for students and researchers in the Baltic Sea Region? Strategic and innovative mobility

Tuesday 23 November 2010, 09.30 - 16.30

Danish Architecture Centre • Strandgade 27B • Copenhagen

HOW TO PROMOTE MOBILITY FOR STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION? STRATEGIC AND INNOVATIVE MOBILITY

Common strengths and challenges

Current and future strengths of the Baltic Sea Region in the globalised world lie in the level of knowledge and the ability to turn this knowledge into competitive products. Talent and knowledge must be available in the Baltic Sea Region, today and in the future, and it must be of a quality that can meet the fierce competition from the region's global competitors, e.g. the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China). To succeed, knowledge, students and researchers must increasingly move within the region, crossing borders between countries, industry and academia. The region has to improve in developing, attracting and retaining the best and the brightest talents in order to be an innovative, competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economic player in the world.

Strategic initiatives to rise to the challenges of globalisation

In 2009 the European Commission launched the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in order to meet a number of challenges that require action at the regional level. Four key challenges were identified as requiring urgent attention:

- To enable a sustainable environment
- To enhance the region's prosperity
- To increase accessibility and attractiveness
- To ensure safety and security in the region

The Strategy aims at coordinating actions by Member States, regions, the EU, pan-Baltic organisations, financing institutions and non-governmental bodies to promote a more balanced development of the Region. Among other goals, the Strategy focuses on ensuring dynamic people in the region who are willing to invest personal resources in improving it as well as skilled and efficient workers bringing additional prosperity.

In order to support this urgent aspect of the Strategy, Denmark, Lithuania and Germany have offered to lead a flagship project aiming to identify barriers hampering mobility of researchers and students, and enhance cooperation on the so-called 'Fifth Freedom'. As part of the 2010 Danish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation together with the Nordic Council of Ministers and Baltic Development Forum, is organising this conference with the aim to discuss mobility and its role in joining closer together education, innovation and research.

The knowledge triangle: Strategic and Innovative Mobility

The knowledge triangle - education, science and innovation - is the current focus for political cooperation to ensure smart growth in the European Union as a whole, and is a useful illustration to understand the challenges facing us in order to increase smart growth in the Baltic Sea Region.

INTRODUCTION

3

Universities are important actors in the realisation of the potential of the knowledge triangle. Universities foster relevant and available high standard knowledge through education and research, which further contributes to economic growth in society.

On the basis of the logic of the knowledge triangle, there is a new momentum to develop and plan relevant and innovation focused higher education programmes, which will emphasise problem solving and knowledge transfer through strategic and innovative mobility. We need graduates who can think out of the box, spot possibilities and turn ideas into real assets. The Region requires graduates who are highly employable and take the competences, the knowledge and the networks acquired at university straight into their first job. These highly skilled alumni will contribute to growth and wealth of society and business in the Baltic Sea Region.

Mobility plays a key role in ensuring employability by strengthening the international competences of young people, as well as contributes to knowledge transfer as mobility helps foster networks across borders. More students should go abroad to study - or to do an internship - for a semester or longer. Universities and employers have a common interest in this and also a common responsibility.

How to promote mobility for students and researchers in the Baltic Sea Region?

- Strategic and Innovative Mobility

In order to realise the full potential of the synergies of the knowledge triangle by joining closer together education, innovation and research, and to increase the mobility for students and researchers in the region, new types of partnerships between universities and employers should be established. The knowledge intensive business sectors are vital for the future of the Baltic Sea Region. If the workforce in the region is not sufficiently qualified and does not possess a sufficient level of international experience, these sectors will move their activities outside the region.

At the conference key actors from universities, the world of business, relevant government agencies and strategic actors in the Baltic Sea Region will share information, discuss best practices and explore new ideas and actions for boosting mobility of students and researchers in the region.

Key questions

- What competences are most relevant for the employability of university graduates in the Baltic Sea Region in order to support the knowledge-based business sectors?
- What is the contribution of mobility in enhancing these relevant competences?
- What is good practice in terms of cooperation between universities and business in developing programmes at bachelor, masters, and PhD-level?
- What are the incentives for companies and for universities to encourage more mobility?
- What are the motives for individual students and researchers to be more mobile?
- How can we further enhance public-private partnerships and cooperation between universities and business to further develop the talent base in the Baltic Sea Region? Could cross border cluster cooperation in specific business and research areas be used as a model?
- Do the current incentive structures and programmes fit the current realities? What about the future - do we need new programmes?

PROGRAMME

- 10.00 - 10.15** **How to promote mobility for students and researchers in the Baltic Sea Region?**
Introduction to the conference programme
 By moderator **Mikael Lindholm**, Innovation Inside
- 10.15 - 10.30** Opening address by **Charlotte Sahl-Madsen**, Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation, Denmark
- 10.30 - 10.40** **Co-operation between the countries in the Baltic Sea Region holds the key to our common destiny.**

Hans Brask, Director, Baltic Development Forum
- 10.40 - 11.15** **Mobility trends in the Baltic Sea Region**
Birger Hendriks, Head of Department for Sciences, Ministry of Science, Economic Affairs and Transport of the State of Schleswig-Holstein, Bologna Follow Up Group

Sophia Eriksson Waterschoot, Head of Sector for Higher Education Policy in DG Education and Culture, European Commission
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- 11.15 - 11.30** **Break - networking and refreshments**
-
- 11.30 - 12.30** **Business Panel**
 How to define skills and competences needed in the job market of today and tomorrow? How to attract and retain the best and the brightest talents challenges, solutions and actions?

Claus Hviid Christensen, Chief Executive Officer, Lindoe Offshore Renewables Center (LORC)

Børge Diderichsen, Vice President, and Head of Corporate Research Affairs, Novo Nordisk

Christoph Anz, Director Education Policy, BMW Group

Marie Kingston, Vice President for Human Resources Development, COWI

Emil Görnerup, Director Research Policy, Confederation of Swedish Enterprise

12.30 - 13.30

Networking Lunch

13.30 - 15.00

University Panel

How to set up strategic mobility partnerships between business and universities across the Baltic Sea Region in order to secure the employability in a global setting of university candidates and researchers - perspectives from universities and students

Svend Hylleberg, Professor, Dean of Aarhus School of Business and Social Sciences, Denmark

Mati Heidmets, Professor and Rector former of Tallinn University, Chairman of the Evaluation Board of Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency, Estonia

Henrik Wolff, Rector of Arcada University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland

Rimantas Vaitkus, Associate Professor, Vice-Rector for International Relations, Vilnius University, Lithuania

Maria Mendel, Professor, Pro-Rector for Educational Matters, University of Gdansk, Poland

Allan Päll, Vice-Chairperson, European Students' Union (ESU)

15.00 - 15.30

Concluding remarks

Gard Titlestad, Head of Department of Knowledge and Welfare, Nordic Council of Ministers

Mikael Lindholm, Innovation Inside

15.30 - 16.30

Networking and refreshments

Dr. Birger Hendriks

Mobility Trends in the Baltic Sea Region

Talking about **mobility of students** means to address at least two different types of studies:

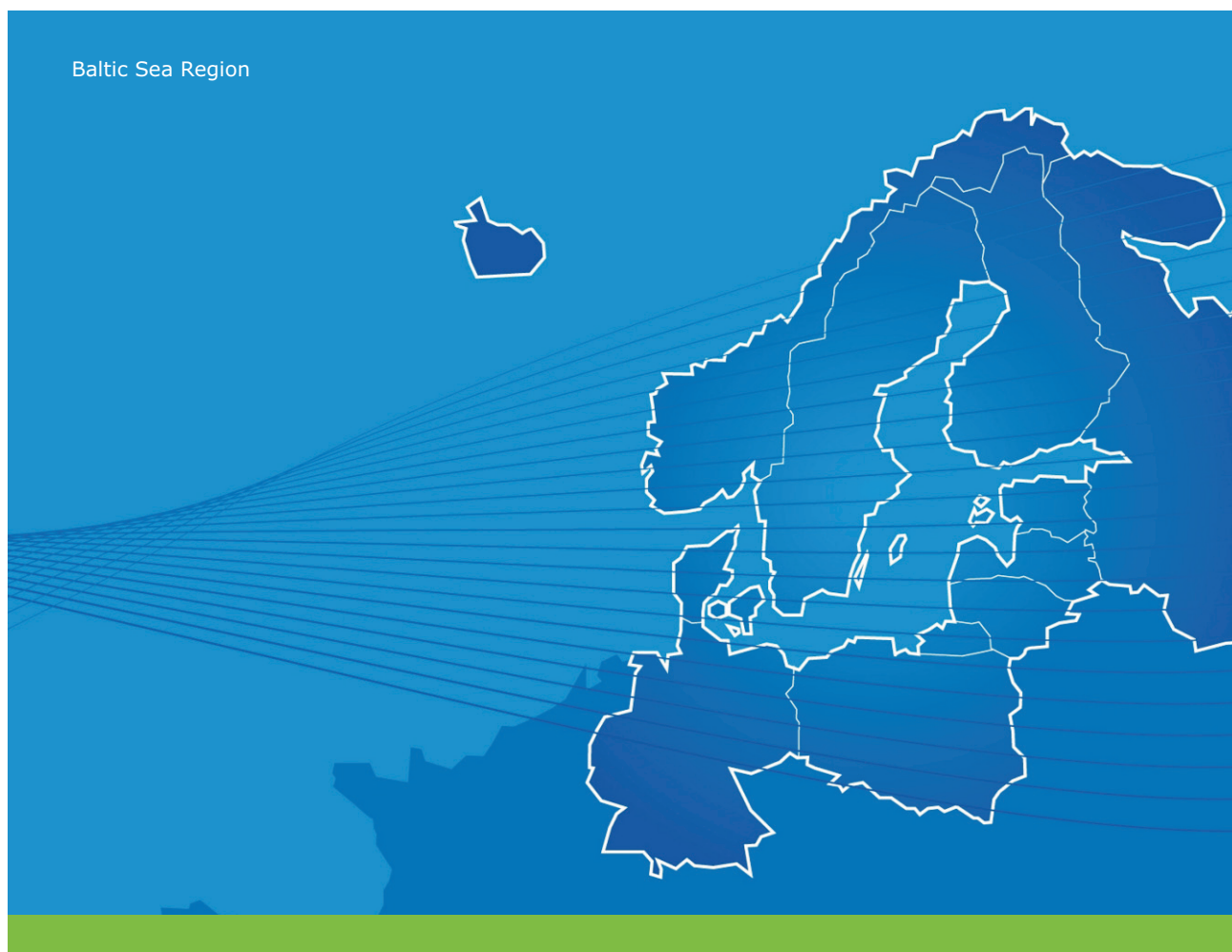
- Students studying abroad for a short time (one or two semesters) or going abroad for an internship can be defined as ***credit mobility***;
- Students going abroad for another study programme (Master or PhD) after having graduated from their home university (Bachelor) or vice versa can be regarded as ***degree mobility***.

Looking at the available **statistical data**, there are no consistent directly comparable figures available for mobile students and researchers in all countries in the Baltic Sea Region. The situation is even worse when it comes to questions concerning how many students go out from country X to country Y and for how long? The registration of credit mobility and in particular the credit mobility of *free movers* (students going abroad on own initiative, not in the framework of an exchange programme or bilateral agreement between universities) - is poor, except in the contexts of Erasmus students and the NORDPLUS programme. The Erasmus statistics are precise but do not include *free movers*. After all, it is necessary to analyze the available data in order to find out tendencies and developments for a given timeline and the reasons for these developments which are interesting enough. But it is not possible to fall back on precise data on mobility of students in the whole Baltic Sea Region.

When looking at the **development of mobility over recent years**, one has to take into account that the total number of students has increased substantially. The absolute figures as well as the percentage of graduates being part of all people born in one year have grown during the last ten years in almost all countries around the Baltic Sea: e.g. in Denmark from 32,1 % (2000) to 48,1 % (2009), in Poland from 12,5 % (2000) to 32,8 % (2009), in Latvia from 18,6 % (2000) to 30,1 % (2009), whereas in Lithuania it decreased from 42,6 % (2000) to 40,6 % (2009) (Source: EUROSTAT).

Also the total **number of foreign students** in countries of the Baltic Sea Region have increased: i.e. in Germany 187.000 (2000) to 244.800 (2009), irrespective of their home country. Only in Latvia these figures decreased from 6.000 (2000) to 1.400 (2009). The numbers of first-year students in Germany coming from other European countries (*Bildungsinlaender*) increased at the universities of applied sciences by 21 % between 2006 and 2008 and by 6 % at the universities in the same period (Source: Di Stasis, Germany). However, the countries from where the foreign students depart are diverse: looking at incoming students in the countries of the Baltic Sea Region, there are several neighbouring countries among the top ten of the countries of origin, but also China, Belarus, Ukraine and others (Source EURODATA).

So **where do the national students go?** This trend is quite different from the patterns of incoming students. National students predominantly go to UK, USA, France, and Germany. Another interesting trend is that the number of outgoing students is lower than the figures of incoming students from abroad in the western Baltic Sea Region countries. Denmark for example had 9 % incoming students in 2006/7, but only 3,2 % were outgoing students (Source: EURODATA). And the student exchange among the NORDPLUS countries has also decreased substantially between 2006 and 2008, especially in credit mobility for up to 12 months. On the other hand, NORDPLUS can state that what they call the *express mobility* (shorter student mobility, lasting less than one month, but more than one week) has doubled in the same time. The same can be said for Germany having 11,3 % incoming students and 4,3 % were outgoing; and the terms of studies abroad are becoming shorter. In Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania the situation was at that time (2006/7) the reversed: 3,2 % incoming students in Estonia, 6 % outgoing (Source: Gate, Germany). From this, one can conclude that Poland, Latvia and Lithuania are so-called *exporters* whereas Germany, Finland and Estonia show balanced figures; and Denmark, Norway and Sweden are the *importers*. But being an *importer* can be a signal of attractiveness or can simply express the fact that the figures of outgoing students are much lower than those of the incoming students. For Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, a possible contributing factor to the decrease in the number of outgoing students could be the financial crisis.



Baltic Development Forum is an independent and high-level network for decision-makers from business, politics, academia and media in the Baltic Sea Region. Our mission is to create a prosperous Baltic Sea Region through regional integration, sustainable growth, innovation and competitiveness. Apart from providing research and publishing reports on topics vital to the development of the Region one of our main activities is the annual Summit, where more than 600 decision-makers from business, politics, academia and media meet to exchange ideas and formulate strategies for the future development of the Region.

The Nordic Council of Ministers is the platform for intergovernmental cooperation between the Nordic countries. It has a broad range of activities within 11 different Ministerial Councils. The purpose of intergovernmental co-operation in the Nordic Council of Ministers is to work toward joint Nordic solutions that have tangible positive effects – Nordic synergies – for the citizens of the individual Nordic countries. In the field of education and research the Nordic Council of Ministers has initiated among other things the Nordic-Baltic education programme Nordplus, a broad range of Nordic Master Programmes, as well as the Nordic research institution NordForsk.