

## **Baltic Sea cities as leaders of comprehensive cooperation between the EU and the Black Sea region. WiseEuropa Institute.**

One of the most promising developments in Europe after the end of the Cold War was the reinvigoration of cooperation between the cities located on the Black and the Baltic Seas' coasts within the framework of emerging formulas of "twin towns" and "partnerships". In fact, the Baltic Sea cities succeeded in establishing one of the most developed regional cooperation in the world. However, when compared to the Baltic Sea, the level of regional cooperation amongst the Black Sea cities is well below its potential due to a high level of geopolitical divisions of the region. For instance, the Black Sea cities have not managed to establish the Union of Black Sea cities.

The cities from the Black Sea region (excluding Greece in the Mediterranean Sea area that is a part of the Black Sea initiatives) established a relatively comprehensive network of ties with the cities of the Baltic region. In consequence, the level of cooperation between the Black Sea cities and their Baltic partners which has been already achieved creates a very timely "window of opportunity" for the Baltic cities to engage and to contribute towards a qualitative enhancement of regional ties in the Black Sea region through the transfer of know-how and the best practices. What is even more important, the increase of economic and social cooperation between the Black Sea and Baltic cities will also definitely strengthen the Black Sea region's ties with the European Union. Indeed, such a scenario would be beneficial not only for both regions but for the entire continent.

Nevertheless, a second great leap in the cooperation between the Black Sea and Baltic cities requires its social entrenchment through the rise of awareness among societies from both regions about mutual benefits stemming from it, rediscovery of common forgotten cultural and historical heritage and the reinforcement of people to people contacts (tourism, student exchanges, scholarships, internships, etc.), especially between young generations.

### **Program**

9:30-10:00 Presentation of the report "From Vikings to the European Union. Foundations of cooperation between Baltic and Black Sea cities" (tentative title)

Adam Balcer, Head of project, WiseEuropa

10:00-10:30 Report from the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Black Sea Club

Ionuț Mocanu, General Manager, Tehnopol, Galati

John Lauritzen, Member of City Council, Næstved

Mantas Jurgutis, Chairman of management and community development committee, Kaunas

10:30-11:15 Comments to the report

Moderator: Adam Balcer, Head of project, WiseEuropa

Piotr Grzelak, Deputy Mayor of Gdańsk

Karin Wohlgemuth, Official, EU/ International Relations, Rostock

Dalia Gurskiene, the Chief Expert of Communication Department, Panevezys

11:15-12:00 Q&A section with the audience  
Moderator: Adam Balcer, Head of project, WiseEuropa

12:00-12:15 Conclusions

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