The Baltic Sea Forum has organized the HELCOM Youth Forum 2012 in cooperation with the Department Maritime Systems at the University of Rostock. The event has financially supported by the Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the Federal Environment Agency.

First, I would like to focus on the role of the Helcom Youth Forum and the sophisticated circumstances of the exchange information in the field of science and education. Helcom Youth Forum wants to show, that the young people around the Baltic Sea have their own identity with this special region. It is going to be to the aspects of this issue, how the Baltic Sea Region growing together. With the HELCOM YOUTH FORUM we want to impart the view of young people’s around the Baltic countries, that we have a responsibility as an residents for this wonderful region with the sea and the long coast. We welcome students of today with high commitment for a clean Baltic Sea, who are the future generation of the Baltic Sea Region. Moreover, the specific role of the Helcom Youth Forum is the interdisciplinary dialogue with the focus, that protection measures and technical solutions in the Baltic Sea promote not only the social and economic welfare in the Baltic region but also the social – economic situations in other regions of the world. One example is the Black Sea. This region can profit from the Baltic Sea region because there a lot of similarities like the geographic and cultural situation (continental sea with different national societies and cultures).

The circumstances for coming together and exchanging information in the area of science and education are very sophisticated because the Baltic Sea area is well known for their long tradition in the field of education. After the fall of The Iron Curtain there are multiple networks of education institutions and networks. One example is The Baltic Sea Region University Network (BSRUN) agreement which was signed in Turku on 28 February 2000. It consists of 32 universities from Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia, Estonia, Belarus and Finland. It is a strong partnership regarding education in the fields of economy, European integration and law. We were informed at the conference that, this cooperation continues very successfully with the research association BONUS. In accordance with a long tradition of cooperation between universities the Baltic Sea region evolved to one of the prosperous regions of the world.

One good example for connecting the region is the Baltic Sea Network on Occupational Health and Safety (BSN), which is a regional network of ten countries around the Baltic Sea. The participants are science institutions in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Northwest Russia, Norway, Poland, and Sweden. The Network facilitates the exchange of information among the participating countries and offers and immediate access to country information in the Baltic Sea region - also for users in other countries. Hence, The Baltic Sea Network is an expert information network. Its purpose is to strengthen peer-to-peer networking and collaboration of expert institutions and respective bodies between and within countries in the Baltic Sea region. A major function of the BSN is to make information accessible through a user-friendly Internet. Later I will refer to this special form of collaboration as a solution for the challenge of demographic change.

The role of the Baltic Sea-forum in INTERREG-projects: The Baltic Sea between Blue Growth and Green Limits” or “From Growth Blues to Blue Growth Future prospects for the maritime industries”,

For creating new policy reforms the Baltic Sea can also profit from European INTERREG-projects too. Here the Baltic Sea Forum has got a lot of experience. Hence, the BSF is a key player in order to bring organization in the Baltic Sea Region together. To name one example: Baltic Sea Forum is partner in the INTERREG-Projects Clean Baltic Sea Shipping and InnoShip. Both projects look for innovation, scientific research and technical solutions. For that the BSF will execute political dialogues with our supporting organizations, BSSSC, BSPC, BSF, UBC and HELCOM, concerning our suggested solutions and remaining problem areas.

What does it mean concretely?

The Baltic Sea Forum is looking for innovative solutions for sustainable transport, like in the project Amber Coast Logistic. This session will focus on clean technologies as providers of a competitive edge for shipping and European shipping in particular. At the end of the project, in November 2013, we will be organizing a final conference where we are going to release the Project’s official strategic
document, which shall become an effective tool for making all shipping as clean as possible in the Baltic Sea through its acting Shipping Branch Organizations.

Another important dimension in this context is the question of the potential of renewable marine energies in the face of the climate and fossil fuel reduction challenge: What are the consequences for the environment and spatial planning when we contemplate building up renewable energy capacity? What are the regional 'blue growth' implications of ocean energy industries for coastal zones?

In this context we have demonstrated that technical solutions can be made available for all Baltic Sea Ports to serve the ships with port shore side electricity and sewage reception facilities. We have also found it of utmost importance to, try to reach harmonized port fee principles (between ports and ship owners), so that it will become more cost effective to enter the ports with clean ships, than to carry on using ships releasing more SOx, NOx gases and carbon particles from their main and auxiliary engines.

And while all of this affects the status of the marine biodiversity, on top of this we also have to add the impacts of fisheries. With this in mind I will during my speech deal with 5 issues,
- The importance of science and of ensuring a linkage between the science and the policy-making
- The importance of sector-integration and stakeholder involvement
- The need for synergies between the regional, EU and global levels– and what I would like to refer to as the “three in one approach”
- The need to work together with other organizations within as well as outside the region, and last but not least For this focus, the Baltic Sea Forum has special observer status within the UN Economic Social Council ECOSOC for the possibility to exchange information about challenges and solutions in the Baltic region.

But more important than developing new networks of education and exchange of information in INTERREG-projects are the people (students and professors, workers) in these networks and these European projects. Without focusing on the knowledge of the people, structures and organizations cannot work. Therefore, we have to invest in the knowledge of the people in this region. They have to be educated in a sophisticated and sustainable way. In this short speech I would like to inform you about the new aspects of professional education. This term fits to a sustainable approach of education because it consists of three important aspects which are essential for dealing with future problems in the field of education in a long term way. The three aspects of professional education are:
- Skilled labour
- Social and emotional competence
- Developing an ecological mindset