**Programme of the Polish Presidency in BASTUN 2025**

Poland's BASTUN Presidency Programme 2025, which is the result of cooperation between three Polish trade union federations - the All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions (OPZZ), the Forum of Trade Unions (FZZ) and the NSZZ Solidarność - reflects a common approach to the most important challenges facing Baltic Sea workers and focuses on activities that - given our limited calendar - are realistic to carry out and at the same time most relevant from the perspective of the whole network.

Our aim is not to overdevelop the programme, but to focus on those functions of BASTUN that bring real value: exchange of experience, mutual learning, presentation of good practices, policy positions and influence on the public and European debate. The Polish Presidency will therefore implement activities within the two key pillars, emphasising their practicality and implementation capacity.

In the face of deepening geopolitical tensions and dynamic socio-economic changes, Poland's Presidency of BASTUN in 2025 assumes exceptional importance. The Baltic Sea region is today becoming not only a space for cooperation, but also a field where the interests of global political, military and economic forces intersect. In this context, the role of trade unions should not be limited to the defence of workers' rights alone - it becomes part of a broader effort to build sustainable security, democratic resilience and an economy based on decent work.

The Polish Presidency is formulating two strategic pillars of action:

1. **Social, democratic and defence security** - as a foundation for stability, resilience and peace;
2. **Industrial policy and job protection** - as a basis for equitable development and economic strength of the region.

**Pillar I: Social, democratic and defence security**

Social security is much more than access to healthcare, one's own home or a decent pension. It is above all the feeling that the state is on the side of citizens - especially in moments of crisis. In times of war, disinformation and hybrid threats, we need societies based on mutual trust, strong public institutions and active civic organisations.

Today, with war in the immediate vicinity of the Baltic Sea region, security must also include a military dimension. A holistic approach to defence - encompassing both military and social preparedness - is necessary. Without an integrated society, without strong civic structures and without trust in institutions, no military strategy will be effective.

Trade unions are an integral part of the security infrastructure. Their presence in the workplace, their ability to organise support, engage in dialogue and respond to injustices make them one of the main pillars of social resilience. Workers in strategic sectors - such as energy, transport, health care or industry, as well as those in the wider public finance sector (police, border guards, court and prosecution staff) - need to be protected, respected and listened to, as the functioning of the state in emergencies depends on their work.

In broadening the definition of security, we must also include issues of civic education, counter-radicalisation, social integration and the promotion of active citizenship. A secure society is a society that is organised, aware of its rights and capable of informational and cultural self-defence.

The Polish Presidency will strengthen these functions by:

* Prepare and present one good practice from a selected member country on the role of trade unions in crisis situations,
* Adopt a common political position on the role of trade unions in social security and defence systems,
* Organising a study visit within the framework of the EU project carried out by the Trade Union Forum under the title "Strategy of the MKW. "MKW Strategy. Monitoring Law and Public Policies. Communication and Influencing Relations with Key Stakeholders in Social Dialogue Bodies' during which, among other things, the priorities and challenges for trade union leaders in the Baltic Sea area will be discussed.
* invite a representative of an institution dealing with civil or defence security in the region,

**The Polish Presidency's position on social and defence security**

We believe that it is essential to systematically include workers' organisations in all stages of the planning, implementation and monitoring of social security and crisis management systems in the Baltic Sea States. Trade union organisations should not only be consulted, but also have a real influence on decision-making processes in this regard.

Trade unions are often the first point of contact for workers experiencing the consequences of crises - whether economic, political or military. Therefore, their experience, ability to mobilise and knowledge of real social needs make them an indispensable partner in building the long-term resilience of local communities and entire states, while promoting the treatment of workers as full participants in defence strategies and the inclusion in national and regional security policies of not only military aspects, but also: human rights, freedoms citizenship, access to public services and equal opportunities. The future of security in the region depends not only on military strength, but also on social cohesion, strong institutions and active citizens.

**Pillar II: Industrial policy and job protection**

The economy of the Baltic Sea region is facing profound challenges. Many traditional industries are undergoing rapid change due to technological advances, automation and the need to protect the environment. While some sectors are declining, others - such as renewable energy, digital logistics or social services - are gaining ground.

In this context, it is most important that the process of industrial modernisation does not take place at the expense of the workers. Trade unions must have a real say in shaping industrial policy. Their presence at the negotiating table ensures that economic development takes place in a fair manner, protecting employment and the dignity of working people.

Industrial policy must not only be competitive, but also sustainable and socially responsible. Workers should be guaranteed the right to be informed, consulted and co-determined on matters concerning their workplaces, competences and professional future.

The Polish Presidency will strengthen these functions by:

* Selection and presentation of one good practice from a Member State on decent work in the context of industrial change,
* Preparation and adoption of a common position on industry and employment in the Baltic Sea Region,
* hold a short exchange session on industrial policy and quality of employment at one of the two annual meetings,
* the creation of a short briefing note on the impact of social dumping on employment in the region (prepared jointly by BASTUN members).

**The Polish Presidency's position on industrial policy and employment**

We are of the opinion that the future of industry in the Baltic Sea Region must be based on social justice, quality employment and the active participation of the social partners. We reject a model based on cheap labour, the erosion of workers' rights and external cost shifting. We call for building a modern, stable and sustainable industry - with the worker at the centre of economic decisions. We declare our readiness to work together with European institutions, governments of the region and employers' representatives to build a fair and sustainable future for work.

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