

#### **4 Awarded Cultural Pearls title holders to begin their actions in 2026**

**After an intense journey that started in February of this year, the selection of the 2026 Cultural Pearls has been announced: Municipalities Glücksburg (GER), Kristinestad-Kristiinankaupunki (FIN), Krosno (POL) and Schleswig (GER) will continue their path toward strengthening social resilience through culture as BSR Cultural Pearls 2026. In total, 11 highly motivated candidates reached the final round, expanding the Cultural Pearls Network across the Baltic Sea Region.**

Throughout the process, all candidate cities have shown deep commitment to identifying local challenges and exploring how to address them using local resources, culture and creativity. Guided by mentors and experts from the growing **Cultural Pearls Network**, they have each developed a unique **Culture and Resilience Action Plan (CuReAP)**. This roadmap for the title year to come recognizes the potential of cultural initiatives, bringing people together, involving their citizens and developing a deeper sense of belonging and togetherness in the process.

Following these steps, it was the task of a diverse international jury of experts in social resilience, urban planning, arts, and culture, as well as representatives from pan-Baltic and European organisations and networks of cities to make the final selection bestowing the 2026 Cultural Pearls title on the most outstanding and impactful action plan for culture-driven social resilience. While the Culture and Resilience Action Plans may vary widely in theme, they share a vision: Culture as a connective force for engaging people and building resilient communities.

***Resilience starts with people - connected, able and willing to shape the future of their hometowns, says Felix Schartner Giertha, BSR Cultural Pearls project manager representing the lead partner, the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat. Culture, creativity and togetherness is the lifeblood of active communities. On the local level, decision makers know this. Pearls provides an opportunity to connect with other towns and cities, kick-start this work and get noticed in the process!***

#### **A Year of Growth and Collaboration lies ahead**

Alongside the jury of experts, the BSR Cultural Pearls partner consortium congratulates **the newest BSR Cultural Pearls Glücksburg (GER), Kristinestad-Kristiinankaupunki (FIN), Krosno (POL) and Schleswig (GER)** on their achievement and looks forward to celebrating their achievement at the Award Ceremony in the framing of the Cultural for Resilience Forum from November 25-27, 2025, in Varde, Denmark. The C4R Forum 2025 will highlight the change on the ground achieved by the strong network of residents, creative minds and dedicated partners around the Baltic Sea, and look at the future of the Baltic Pearls initiative.

The BSR Cultural Pearls title year itself will be officially inaugurated on 20 January 2026 with the first in a line of multiple online events throughout the year, including peer-learning across Pearl cities from previous years, expert interventions and further networking opportunities. This 'Network Session Series' provides insights on the following topics:

- **Good practices showcasing how culture makes communities stronger**
- **Cross-departmental cooperation and administration**
- **The CuReAPs put into practice**
- **Participatory methods fostering community engagement**
- **Collaboration between the Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS) and municipalities**

Showcased across the region, the BSR Cultural Pearls title holders highlight the power of community and culture, gaining international exposure in the process. Both awardees and candidates alike join the Cultural Pearls Network and thereby gain a platform for exchange and continuing to enhance their community's resilience amongst peers. With every new generation of BSR Cultural Pearls title holders and candidates more ways of how small towns can reclaim cultural vitality to enrich civic life are illustrated, adding to a diverse experience portfolio to learn from. The interactive Culture for Resilience (online) platform for good practices ([www.cultureforresilience.eu](http://www.cultureforresilience.eu)) collects and presents these initiatives of all BSR Cultural Pearls past and present as inspiration to an even wider audience.

**And the journey continues: The Call for BSR Cultural Pearls 2027 will open in spring of 2026.**

*BSR Cultural Pearls is a title for towns, cities and municipalities that provides the awardees with a recognized framework to strengthen their capacity to use culture in building social resilience. The BSR Cultural Pearls title is awarded for the third time, resulting in the line of awardees now counting 14 Pearls. The project is co-financed by the Interreg BSR programme until the end of 2025 and will move into its next phase based on the continuation of the title awards, developed resources and lessons learned including the collective fostering of the Cultural Pearls Network.*

Access more information and resources via [www.culturalpearls.eu](http://www.culturalpearls.eu)

For media contacts:

**Lara Knigge**

BSR Cultural Pearls Project Communication

Project Partner ARS BALTICA

E-mail: [lara.knigge@arsbaltica.net](mailto:lara.knigge@arsbaltica.net)