

2002 CBSS 11th Ministerial Session - Svetlogorsk Declaration

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)

represented by the Foreign Ministers of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden and a Member of the European Commission

convened at Svetlogorsk in the Kaliningrad Oblast of the Russian Federation for the 11th Ministerial session of the CBSS, marking the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Council,

and adopted the following Declaration.

A Decade of Concentrated Effort

Driven by the will to enhance stability and prosperity in the Baltic Sea region through strengthened co-operation on an equal and non-discriminatory basis, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the countries of the region and a representative of the European Commission adopted the Copenhagen Declaration and established the Council of the Baltic Sea States in March 1992.

Time has proven this choice to be a good way to secure, in close collaboration with the enlarging European Union, the sustainable development of the region in an era of historical changes on the European and international arena.

Shared responsibility for the future of the Baltic Sea region has allowed the Baltic Sea States to develop unprecedented multilateral co-operation, covering a wide range of intergovernmental relations, i.a. democratic institutions, human rights, sustainable development, energy, environment, radiation safety, trade, economy, spatial planning, transport, information and communication technology, civil security, youth, culture, protection of children, and the fight against organised crime and communicable diseases.

The activities of the CBSS have created closer links between many regions of the Member States and promoted cross-border co-operation in the Baltic Sea region in general and with the North-West and the Kaliningrad Oblast of the Russian Federation in particular.

The Council has contributed to the creation of a civil society network around the Baltic Sea and has helped to improve people-to-people contacts significantly. Numerous links have been established among non-governmental organisations, and Baltic Sea region-wide NGO fora have been organised.

The CBSS has contributed to the strong increase in trade and investments in the region, through supportive measures and the removal of obstacles. The CBSS Business Advisory Council has been of assistance in this process.

Regional co-operation has been a contributing factor to the sustainable development of the Baltic Sea States, and to a better functioning of democratic institutions and the efficient promotion of human rights, including gender equality issues, the rights of the child and the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

With these constructive and result-oriented developments the Baltic Sea region has generated a trend in European policies in relation to regional and cross-border co-operation and contributed to security and stability in an undivided Europe.

Common implementation of the goals and spirit of the 1992 Copenhagen Declaration has increased the understanding and confidence between the Baltic Sea States, and has created a new positive identity of the Baltic Sea region.

Enhancing Baltic Sea Co-operation

These achievements of the CBSS have been facilitated by a number of innovations and reforms.

Baltic Sea States Summits of Heads of Government have been held three times, giving strong overall political guidance and stimulus to regional co-operation. Ministerial meetings have been held in many fields, and corresponding working groups have been established.

To promote and consolidate democratic development in the member states, an independent CBSS Commissioner has been appointed. High-level Task Forces have been set up to fight organised crime and control the spread of communicable diseases. Special programmes have been created for higher education (EuroFaculty), energy (Baltic Sea Regional Energy Co-operation - BASREC) and sustainable development (Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region – Baltic 21). The Council took note of the new institutional arrangements for co-operation on child matters.

The CBSS is served by a permanent secretariat since 1998. In 2000 all regional intergovernmental co-operation taking place among the group of CBSS members was consolidated within the framework of the CBSS.

Parliamentary co-operation has been carried out through yearly conferences held by members of national and regional parliaments of the Baltic Sea states within the framework of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), ensuring democratic transparency and providing important impetus to regional co-operation.

Municipal and regional authorities have established sub-regional institutions for the development of local democracy, people-to-people contacts and cross-border co-operation in a wider sense: e.g. the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC), the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation (BSSSC) and a number of Euroregions.

A View into the Future

This 10th anniversary of the CBSS is not only a landmark but also a point of departure for attaining new goals.

The Members of the Council share the belief that co-operation within the framework of the CBSS will continue to diversify and strengthen, becoming a permanent political and economic factor in the north of Europe. By adapting itself to changing circumstances, taking up issues of vital common interest and aiming at concrete results, the CBSS will be able to meet the challenges ahead.

In the years to come, the Member States of the CBSS will remain united in their commitment to realizing the full potential of good-neighbourly co-operation. For the next decade, their goal will be to foster a region of accelerated sustainable growth, good environment and improved social welfare, a region where all countries and societies enjoy security and stability and share common democratic values.

The Baltic Sea States will further enhance the role of the CBSS as a political co-ordinator and initiator of wide-ranging regional co-operation.

The ultimate goal of the CBSS is to secure a prosperous future for the Baltic Sea region. The dynamics of the relationship between trade and investments, growth and welfare, stability and security will be fully utilised in the endeavour to achieve this objective. Sustainable development in our region should be ensured, e.g. through the activities of Baltic 21.

The Baltic Sea States are convinced that the promotion of democracy and human rights is an integral part of CBSS activities. The work of the CBSS Commissioner on Democratic Development is of special importance in this respect.

The Council encourages the intensified co-operation among non-governmental organisations and other civil society structures of the Baltic Sea region. This process of networking helps to identify priority tasks to be solved in common.

The results of CBSS co-operation are beneficial for all areas in and around the Baltic Sea region. The Council will continue to encourage intensified co-operation between municipal and regional authorities to enhance economic and social development. Further emphasis will be put on the sub-national level of co-operation, cross-border projects and interaction with the BSSSC and the UBC in developing trade, small and medium-sized enterprises, cultural exchanges and tourism, new transportation links and people-to-people contacts.

The Council expressed its support for regional measures to promote the development of Kaliningrad Oblast of the Russian Federation, such as the EuroFaculty project and tripartite training initiatives of Lithuania, Poland and Russia, and welcomed the initiative to set up an ad-hoc group for business development in the Oblast.

The future of the Baltic Sea region is seen as a continuous process of strengthening constructive interdependence and coherence with other European structures. The CBSS is especially in favour of intensified co-ordination and co-operation with other bodies in the North of Europe, i.e. the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the Arctic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM).

The CBSS reiterates the significance of further EU enlargement embracing Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

The Council emphasises that the Kaliningrad Oblast of the Russian Federation should become an example of fruitful EU-Russia interaction, in solving relevant practical problems and seizing the opportunities offered by EU enlargement. The CBSS will utilise its advantage of encompassing both members and non-members of the EU to prevent divisions and achieve cohesion.

The Northern Dimension is a dynamic framework for dialogue and co-operation, which constitutes a valuable link between the EU and the CBSS. The CBSS and other regional organisations should contribute to the implementation of all sectors of the Northern Dimension Action Plan.

The Council reiterated its strong condemnation of the terrorist acts committed in the USA on 11 September 2001. Such acts, like any act of international terrorism, constitute a threat to international peace and security. The CBSS expresses its willingness to contribute to the fight against international terrorism in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter, international law and relevant international conventions and with resolution 1373 of the UN Security Council.

Already many of the activities of the CBSS contribute to the elimination of risks of terrorism affecting the Baltic Sea region, and will be continued. The Council encourages the relevant CBSS structures and the Task Force on Organized Crime in the Baltic Sea region to enhance collaboration within their mandates towards this aim.

Final Provisions

The Council looks forward to the 4th Baltic Sea States Summit in St. Petersburg in June 2002, the first such summit during the second decade of activities of the Council.

The Member States look forward to Finland assuming the CBSS Presidency from July 2002 and noted the readiness of Estonia to succeed Finland in 2003.

Finland invited the Members of the CBSS to the next Ministerial meeting, which will take place in June 2003.