

Terms of Reference of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (1992)

Conference of the Foreign Ministers of the Baltic Sea States

Copenhagen, 5-6 March 1992

Terms of Reference for the Council of the Baltic Sea States

1. At their meeting in Copenhagen on 5-6 March 1992, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden, in the presence of the representative from the European Commission, decided to establish a Council of the Baltic Sea States, as explained in the joint statement from the meeting.
2. The purpose of the Council will be to serve as a forum for guidance and overall coordination among the participating states.
3. This new Council should not be seen as a new formalized institutional framework with a permanent secretariat. Rather, the envisaged cooperation among the countries in question should be of a traditional intergovernmental nature, where the host country of each session assumes responsibility for providing secretariat services.
4. Members will be those countries invited to the Copenhagen conference and the European Commission.
5. Each country will be represented on the Council by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Commission by a member of the European Commission.
6. The Copenhagen meeting is to be considered the founding conference as well as the first session of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.
7. The Council will convene once a year in one of the participating states on a rotational basis, unless otherwise decided. Each session will decide on the date and venue of the next session upon the invitation of one of the foreign ministers.
8. A session of the Council will as a general rule not exceed two working days.
9. With the exception of the Copenhagen meeting, which will be chaired jointly by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Denmark and Germany, the chairmanship of each session shall be assumed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the host country.
10. Responsibility for coordinating matters relating to the Council between two sessions will be assumed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs hosting the subsequent session. A Committee of Senior Officials shall meet between two sessions of the Council in order to discuss and

implement ideas and matters relating to cooperation within the framework of the Council. Unless otherwise decided, such meetings shall normally be held in the capital of the forthcoming host country.

11. The host country of each session will bear all costs in connection with holding the meeting, while the other participating states will cover the expenses relating to travel and stay of their respective delegations.

12. The sessions of the Council will be conducted in English, German and Russian, unless otherwise decided. Simultaneous interpretation from and into these languages will be provided by the host country. Meetings of the Committee of Senior Officials and working groups will conduct their business in English.

13. Decisions of the Council and its subsidiary bodies will be taken by consensus.

14. Each session of the Council will be prepared by a meeting, or meetings, of the Committee of Senior Officials. Such meetings will be held in the host country of the forthcoming session of the Council.

15. Provisions relating to sessions of the Council will apply to meetings of the Committee of Senior Officials, *mutatis mutandis*, unless otherwise decided.

16. The Council and its working bodies may decide to invite special participants, guests or observers to participate in its sessions. In this connection particular attention shall be given to representatives of regions, subregions and international organizations.

17. The Council will set its own agenda for its sessions upon the proposal of the host country of each session.

18. Subjects for cooperation among the Baltic Sea countries are:

- assistance to new democratic institutions
- economic and technological assistance and cooperation
- humanitarian matters and health
- protection of the environment and energy cooperation
- cooperation in the field of culture, education, tourism and information
- transport and communication

The Council may decide to include other matters and possible subjects for cooperation among the Baltic Sea States.

19. The Council may decide to set up working groups with a specific mandate in relation to cooperation among the Baltic Sea countries. Such working groups may be charged with the elaboration of recommendations for approval by the Council at a subsequent session, or, in urgent matters, by silent procedure. Provisions relating to sessions of the Council will apply to meetings of working groups as well, *mutatis mutandis*, unless otherwise decided.

20. Meetings of ministers with responsibility for specific areas may be held within the framework of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

21. Participation in the Council of the Baltic Sea States will not in any way infringe on any international obligation, be it of a legal or a political nature, of any of the participating states.