

THE DANISH EU PRESIDENCY AND THE NORTHERN DIMENSION:

Setting the Stage for a New Action Plan

BY
DR. PER STIG MØLLER, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK

An important task of the recent Danish EU Presidency (July – December 2002) was fulfilled at the EU 15+7 Ministerial Conference on the Northern Dimension at Luxembourg on 21 October 2002: the Chairman’s conclusions contain the Guidelines for a new Action Plan for the Northern Dimension. The next step will be to develop a precise Action Plan on that basis.

The Northern Dimension is about Northwest Russia. It is a framework for continuous dialogue on priorities and for coordination and cooperation. The approach is broad and horizontal. The aim is to add value by promoting coherent actions. The key words are: “dialogue”, “coordination”, “cooperation” and “coherence”. There are many actors making decisions in our area. It is important that we agree on aims and priorities and that our actions are coordinated.

Priority to borders

The Danish EU Presidency strived to develop the Northern Dimension as a supplement to EU enlargement. The focus was on Russia’s border from the Barents Sea to Kaliningrad. Our aim was to promote cooperation across this border and make the border efficient, meaning that it allows easy passage for legal purposes but presents a real obstacle for illegal traffic. We need better border management and better border infrastructure. The Northern Dimension gives priority to regional development of border regions. Border areas have traditionally been poor. Regional development must

provide productive employment and prevent these regions from falling behind in economic growth. Cross-border cooperation is part of the solution. Euro-Regions and the Nida-initiative (on the Kaliningrad–Lithuania border) are models for such developments.

Priority to business

The Baltic Sea area is in a dynamic development mode. However, more must be done to promote business – in particular with Russia. By improving the business climate – the framework conditions for business – we can create more trade and at-

“Private business is the engine that will integrate northwestern Russia into the dynamic Baltic Sea region.”

tract much more investments. More private financing would be available for job creation and growth under the right conditions. The Guidelines contain priorities which have recently been emphasised by the President of Russia, i.a. the need to



Dr. Per Stig Møller, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Denmark.

improve conditions for small- and medium-sized enterprises and the need to use Russian scientific potential more effectively to promote economic development. Private business is the engine that will integrate northwestern Russia into the dynamic Baltic Sea region. A favourable development in the Baltic Sea area will become the catalyst that accelerates EU–Russia cooperation. It is the task of governments to create the right conditions.

The current Action Plan has the following priorities: Environment, nuclear safety, Kaliningrad and fighting crime. These priorities will be continued. The new plan will put even stronger emphasis on Kaliningrad that will be given special attention in all activities under the Northern Dimension. The Arctic is another territory that is given special emphasis. The

Guidelines provide firm support for efforts to promote Arctic development.

Financing

The EU budget does not contain provisions for the Northern Dimension. Financing of activities will depend on the traditional sources: National budgets and EU programmes, in particular TACIS and INTERREG. The Northern Dimension should not be understood as a list of projects in search of financing. The value of the Northern Dimension lies in the dialogue on joint priorities and in the coordination of projects and activities.

The Baltic Sea region is de-

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veloping positively. A good political climate promotes cooperation. We have no intractable political problems in the Baltic Sea region. The states in our region have the will to cooperate and our region has resources to



With pride and a strong faith in the future

BALTINFO EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH MS. OUTI OJALA, PRESIDENT OF THE NORDIC COUNCIL AND CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE BALTIC SEA PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

Baltinfo: The Nordic Council (NC) just celebrated its 50th anniversary in Helsinki. In a period of deepening and widening of European integration, what is the role of Nordic cooperation for the next 50 years? Will the NC still have a role to play – if so, what would that be?

Ojala: Yes, we just celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Nordic Council and we did it with pride and a strong faith in the future. Nordic cooperation has been a success story in many ways and a forerunner in regional parliamentary cooperation. Ahead of us lie many tasks that must be addressed in order to drive Nordic cooperation forward. Sweeping and revolutionary changes, in our immediate environment and at a global level, pose major challenges to the Nordic region. On occasion, the shared future of the Nordic region has been called into question. Even in a turbulent and rapidly changing world, our cooperation and the values on which it is founded has demonstrated its strength. Today we can note with satisfaction that Nordic cooperation has found a new role for itself in this changed world. The strength of Nordic cooperation has always been the fact that it is based on a profound sense of shared cultural identity. I hope that the importance of our Nordic cooperation and the culture shared by our nations will be understood and valued also by tomorrow's residents of the region. We still value our common cultural identity and conception of soci-



Ms. Outi Ojala, President of the Nordic Council, Chairman of the BSPC Standing Committee.

ety as well as the way our popular movements and parliaments are strongly anchored among our citizens. Therein lies the future of the Nordic region and Nordic cooperation that continues to be a model of partnership of five countries and three autonomous areas. There is a strong sense of belonging together, of being in the same boat. I see that this concept is a very strong one and has a role to play in this part of Europe. We have the intra-Nordic cooperation and the Nordic Council has also become an international actor. There are also considerable political differences between the Nordic countries. We have chosen different solutions concerning our fundamental positions to EU and NATO and we do not always share the same opinions, even in crucial political questions. Regardless of these differences, we have been able to create a very strong and fruitful cooperation. The Nordic Council approved in 2001 one of the

first regional programs and strategies for sustainable development, which we had the opportunity to present at the recent UN World Summit at Johannesburg. The implementation of that program is a high priority for us. We are still very engaged in safeguarding the rights of Nordic inhabitants. Although we have conventions covering many important fields of society, we discovered that there are still obstacles to the free movement of citizens between the Nordic countries. There are those who claim that the Nordic cooperation has come to its end. I do not think so. It is my conviction that the

Ojala: Actually, the Nordic Council started cooperation with the Baltic parliaments already during the Soviet period. We are proud of our contacts and close cooperation with the Baltic Assembly. The communication takes place on a daily basis. Our two parliamentary organisations mirror each other – the structures are quite similar to each other and this makes it easy to cooperate. Political stability and democratic development in the Baltic region thus became one of the principal foreign policy objectives of Nordic cooperation. Simultaneously, the traditional taboo on foreign and security policy debates

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Nordic Council still has an important role to play within the Nordic countries as well as in relation to our neighbours in Northern Europe.

Baltinfo: Since the early 1990's, the Nordic Council has been engaged in various projects with the "adjacent areas", i.e. the three Baltic countries and north-western Russia. Looking back over this past decade, what are the main achievements of this engagement? What is the present and future perspective for this effort?

within the Nordic Council disappeared. Since the early 1990's, the Council's sessions have discussed international issues and provided parliamentary debates on the basis of reports from the Nordic ministers for foreign affairs. The Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council have organised three joint meetings at which almost 150 parliamentarians have attended. Our committees meet on a regular basis. Some 200 Baltic parliamentarians have during the last 10 years visited Nordic countries to participate in our exchange pro-

grammes. The fourth joint meeting between our organizations will be held in Lund, Sweden in April 2003. The main themes will be: regional policy of the EU, including the Northern Dimension; organized crime with a focus on narcotics, trafficking and corruption; civil security and civil crisis management. We have also built up a network of contacts with Russian parliamentarians on both the national and regional levels. Parliamentarians from areas adjacent to the Nordic countries have participated in our exchange programmes. During the last few years we had rapporteurs on Murmansk, Karelia and Kaliningrad. The Nordic Council, together with the Russian State Duma, organised an international conference in Karelia. Baltic and Russian parliamentarians regularly attend our sessions and thematic conferences. The Northern Dimension has been discussed with our friends from the Baltic States and Russia. The Nordic Council has initiated different processes of regional cooperation: Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, BSPC, which is the oldest of the existing structures in the region; the Barents parliamentary cooperation; the Arctic parliamentary cooperation.

Baltinfo: Since the mid-1990s, EU enlargement to the Baltic Sea Region is a central feature of politics and economics of the region. How did the accession of Finland and Sweden impact on Nordic cooperation? In what way will the accession of the three Baltic countries and Poland influence Nordic cooperation?

Ojala: When Finland, Norway and Sweden were negotiating their membership in the European Union, we in the Nordic Council believed that the cir-

cumstances would be markedly changed when at the beginning of 1995 Finland and Sweden joined Denmark as members of the European Union. We found ourselves at the time in the midst of an important process of change. We found that there was a need for review and adjustment. This process entailed setting new goals and priorities, as well as rethinking old modes of operation. We then renewed our structure to better adapt to the situation. Five years later, we realised that the organisation once again needed to be reconstructed. But the membership of Finland and Sweden in the European Union did not affect the foundations of Nordic cooperation. The Nordic Council welcomes and supports the enlargement of the EU. An enlargement comprising Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will shift the centre of gravity of the EU towards the north. After the enlargement of the European Union, the Northern Dimension will have a strong focus on the conditions and issues in Northwest Russia. It is in everybody's interest that democratic, economic and social development proceeds in a stable manner and contributes to closing the gap between the prosperous and poorer parts of the region. Within a few years, the organizational chart of Europe will be redrawn. The countries of Europe will have a variety of organisational affiliations. There should be a harmony of approach, not least concerning democracy and human rights. This will provide a solid foundation for further cooperation. The mixture of various solutions can boost our comprehensive capacity to deal with the challenges facing Europe.

Baltinfo: Relations with Russia, especially its northwestern regions, have been on the agenda

of the NC since the early-1990s. How has the relationship developed over that period? What are the perspectives for the future?

Ojala: Freedom, security and prosperity are best supported by promoting democracy and a fair social and economic development. The international activities of the Nordic Council have a strong focus on the adjacent areas. Of key significance in this respect are the Baltic Sea region and northwestern Russia, as well as the Arctic and Barents regions. When the Baltic countries and Poland join the EU, our relationship will develop further. The Nordic Council wishes to be a bridge and link to Russia. We have good working

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contacts to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation as well as to the regional parliaments in our adjacent areas. There are already structures that can be used in our contacts to Russia – i.e. the Baltic Sea Parliamentary cooperation. At our latest conference in the end of September 2002 we were able to discuss i.a. the problems of Kaliningrad in a very constructive way. I would like to see more cooperation between our organisation and Russian parliamentarians. We have a lot of joint issues that need joint solutions and we parliamentarians need to take the initiative. Indeed, one such ini-

tiative led to the Baltic Sea cooperation. The parliamentarians at an early stage proposed that the CBSS ought to be set up. We should be grateful for those people who foresaw the need for a new regional structure.

Baltinfo: The Northern Dimension, as a major EU initiative has been criticized for lack of tangible results. According to the EU guidelines paper adopted in October 2002, the main regional intergovernmental organisations in northern Europe (Arctic Council, Barents Euro-Arctic Council, CBSS, NCM) should coordinate their activities and agree on a division of labour and responsibility vis-à-vis the new Northern Dimension Action Plan for 2004–06. How do you see the ND developing in the next few years? What could be the role of the NC in realizing the stated objectives?

Ojala: The ND concept simply makes sense – it was born out of a real situation, and it is an expression of real concerns. The concept appeals to a latent need and interest among many actors and has been successful in drawing attention to the specific challenges in the region. It has also spawned a number of activities to address those challenges, both among governments and NGOs. The concept is flexible and inclusive, not rigid and exclusive and thus has the capacity to bring together a wide range of initiatives and activities. There is great potential for further elaboration of the concept and the measures by which it should be realized. It can already show a track record of activities, and it serves as a platform upon which specific and practical activities should be inspired, initiated, supported and – hopefully

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Global recognition of regional business potential

BALTINFO INTERVIEW WITH BALTIC DEVELOPMENT FORUM DIRECTOR MR. OLE FRIJS-MADSEN

Baltinfo: As one of the main “behind the scenes” operators, you have a central role in shaping the work of Baltic Development Forum. Could you say a few words about yourself, your background and why you became involved in the BDF?

Frijs-Madsen: I was offered the position as Director of Baltic Development Forum in 2001 and took up my function immediately after the 3rd annual summit in St. Petersburg. It is an enormous pleasure for me to work in an area with which I have been closely involved in my professional life. During my 14 years as a career diplomat in the Danish Foreign Service, the Baltic Sea region, Russia and the EU have been among my key topics. From 1995–1997 I was desk officer for Russia and CBSS and enjoyed dealing with the new democracies in the East. I represented my country in CSO meetings and became chairman of the CBSS Working Group on Democratic Institutions in 1996–97. My training as a lawyer and many years of professional work with the EU as desk officer for the Internal Market and later Economic Counsellor at the Embassy in London have been very useful when dealing with the four EU-candidate countries from the Baltic Sea region. I am extremely pleased that Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland were among the candidate countries finally invited to join the Union at the European Council in Copenhagen this December.

This is a completion of many years’ hard work from all parties involved that adds a new dimension to Baltic Sea cooperation. Baltic Development Forum will be addressing the new challenges facing the region after EU enlargement.

Baltinfo: The 4th annual BDF summit took place in Copenhagen last autumn. The main business theme (realising the BSR as a growth centre by 2005) was subdivided into a “ND Business Forum” and a session on Kaliningrad. How much do you think the EU-Russia relationship is already influencing business decisions in the region? Do you think the conference deliberations helped in some way to shed light on the future directions for this relationship?

Frijs-Madsen: Our main theme in 2002 was developing regional priorities for the region. We had two parallel sessions on the Northern Dimension and the future of Kaliningrad. Those two thematic issues were chosen because they are very much influencing the EU–Russia relationship, which in the future will be even more important for the region. Since 1991, the main reason to develop a strong Baltic Sea cooperation and distinct regional identity has been to break down old barriers and develop new and strong partnerships. This is the *raison d’être* behind the CBSS as well as the BDF. It is no coincidence that the Chairman of BDF, for-

mer Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, is a founding father of both organisations. Baltic Sea cooperation does not make sense without Russia as a committed partner. With eight out of ten Baltic Sea countries being members of the EU, Russia – and also Norway – will face a new situation. The aim for Brussels and Moscow must necessarily be to further develop the partnership between these two global players. There is a shared interest, commercially and politically, to do so. This is where I see a role for Baltic Development Forum in cooperation with its various partners, including the CBSS. We need to continue arguing the case for a strong and coherent Baltic Sea region which could become one of the world’s leading economic

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zones as well as a region of excellence in ITC, environmental standards, energy, biotechnology and other globally attractive areas. The 4th annual Baltic De-



Mr. Ole Frijs-Madsen, Director of Baltic Development Forum.

velopment Forum summit addressed some of the points I just made. I am convinced that the BDF Copenhagen summit – following our yearly discussions previously in St. Petersburg and Malmö – has made decision-makers from business, politics and academia aware of the need to focus more on the EU-Russia relationship to the benefit of the region at large. Business clearly made the case that Russia is an increasingly interesting partner. But they also underscored that risk is still an obstacle for massive investments and that the risk potential (corruption, cumbersome border procedures, weak legal systems etc.) is still too high in certain parts of the Baltic Sea region, including Russia.

Baltinfo: How will the BDF address the Northern Dimension in its future work?

Frijs-Madsen: The Danish EU-presidency and the present Finnish CBSS presidency devoted a lot of attention to the Northern Dimension. The Northern Dimension is seen as an important tool for developing the Northern part of Eu-

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rope. That is why BDF has given the Northern Dimension priority so far. But I do not reject the scepticism voiced during the BDF summit in Copenhagen. Continued focus will of course depend on how the next Action Plan develops. The Northern Dimension has been one of BDF's main themes over the last 2½ years. At the St. Petersburg summit and the Copenhagen summit, special sessions were devoted to this important issue. BDF reported on our summit to the EU ministerial meeting on the Northern Dimension in Luxembourg in October. The message to the Ministers was that the Northern Dimension could gain in strength and momentum as a consequence of the enlargement. But without a conceptual focus nothing will happen in a political process: that also goes for the next Action Plan. Uffe Ellemann-

Jensen recently said it very clearly – we need a new approach, a more comprehensive Action Plan. One of our activities between the annual summits is to secure the business community a strong voice within the EU, especially in connection with the new Northern Dimension Action Plan. The Northern Dimension Business Forum, organised by BDF and chaired by Ellemann-Jensen, offers business leaders the opportunity to speak freely and constructively, identifying problems in the business environment of the region and outlining possible ways of solving them within the Northern Dimension. But business will not support the Northern Dimension if the EU does not develop a new approach for the next Action Plan. Baltic Development Forum intends to maintain the ND on its agenda, but will also focus on new initiatives in view of EU enlargement.

Baltinfo: The next BDF summit is planned for Riga in the autumn of 2003. Can you give our readers any hints already as to its major themes or subjects?

Frijs-Madsen: The 5th annual Baltic Development Forum summit will take place in Riga on 5–7 October 2003. This will be the first BDF summit in one of the three Baltic States. It is an important signal to the four new Baltic Sea EU-member countries that focus will be moved to this part of Europe. The Latvian President in her New Year's address mentioned the Riga summit as one of the three most noteworthy events in Latvia in 2003. BDF is very proud to be mentioned by the President. It proves the

Baltic Development Forum is considered a serious and truly international organisation both regionally as well as on a broader European scale. The themes for this year's summit have not been finally decided. But the new geopolitical situation after EU enlargement is an obvious angle. Baltic Development Forum is keen to highlight the potential of the Baltic Sea region and to expose its assets to the rest of the world. Global Recognition could therefore be one of the themes. The business segment of the summit may also focus on some of the heavy clusters of our region, including energy and ITC. Finally, Mr. Ellemann-Jensen pays great attention to the idea of developing a business plan for Kaliningrad. In November, the European

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Union and Russia agreed to intensify their cooperation to promote the development of Kaliningrad. I could imagine that Baltic Development Forum will discuss a formula that can be used in order to achieve a successful transition for Kaliningrad – and develop a business plan for the exclave.

Baltinfo: What else can we expect of your organisation, the Baltic Development Forum?

Frijs-Madsen: First and foremost, BDF's networking opportunities have almost become an institution in the region. Our members, whom I like to call the core of BDF, certainly have contributed to this. The idea of Baltic Development Forum as a regional networking forum will be strengthened. A lot of hard work has been done to ensure follow-up on the various issues under discussion in our network. This year, we envisage introducing a few new instruments in this regard. First of all, we have established a Baltic Sea Research Network that can advise us and attract attention to academic research about the Baltic Sea region. We are also launching different action-oriented projects, including a Business Round Table to assess the major transport infrastructure needs in the region. Our quarterly publication, Baltic Sea Agenda, will appear in a reshaped version with more focus on business development, new industrial clusters, business profiles as well as political visions for the region. Members of the BDF network will in the new Baltic Sea Agenda have a broader platform for presentations and discussions. Let me finally add that we are pleased to have three major Baltic cities represented as members of Baltic Development Forum. Hamburg and Stockholm have recently joined Copenhagen as one of the 45 current members of Baltic Development Forum. We hope to see more cities, companies and organisations as members in the coming years.

TO YOUR HEALTH!

Communicable Disease Control in the Baltic Sea Region

BY
**AMBASSADOR HARALD SIEM,
HEAD OF THE TASK FORCE SECRETARIAT**

The Task Force on Communicable Disease Control in the Baltic Sea Region was established in the Spring of 2000, after the 3rd Baltic Sea States Summit at Kolding, Denmark. Norway agreed to chair the Task Force and to maintain a small secretariat in Oslo. The Task Force is now halfway through its initial mandate period. A final report will be presented to the 5th Baltic Sea States Summit in 2004.

The first half-year of the Task Force focused on reaching agreement on the main subject areas for collaboration. After wide consultations with the relevant professional communities, it was decided to work in the following areas: surveillance of infectious diseases; tuberculosis control; HIV prevention; prevention of resistance to antimicrobials; strengthening of primary health care. Consequently, the Heads of Government and the EU commission endorsed in early 2001 the background document "Healthy Neighbours". In 2002, it was decided to prioritise prison health, and to develop integrated programmes for hygiene, tuberculosis control and HIV prevention in prisons.

International collaboration takes many forms – one classical model is to establish a new organization with a budget, staff, directors, governing bodies and to assign project management to experienced international experts. For the sake of sustainability, the Task Force did not choose this model. Instead, a loose structure of collaboration was established involving health officials, authorities and experts already engaged in the different subject areas.

Programmes were defined within the design of the Logical Framework Approach, LFA. Programme groups were established for each subject area with representation from the member states, according to their choice. Models for projects were elaborated. International Technical Advisers are available on demand, but the responsibility for project development is with these programme groups. All practical work is then overseen by a group of Senior Health Advisors. Most importantly, all approved projects are

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posted on our web-site www.baltichealth.org. This is a database where benchmarks and progress are reported on by those responsible for each project. This database serves the purpose of information, coordination and reporting.



Kresty prison. Living conditions in many prisons are deplorable and dangerous. We may all pay the price for the spread of multi-resistant tuberculosis and HIV infections.

Photo: Torgrim Rath Olsen, Nordlys, Tromsø

The Task Force itself has no funds and funding for projects is not pooled. Instead, member states and other donors contribute directly to selected projects. The Secretariat has limited funds to facilitate meetings and seminars. By the end of 2002, 153 projects had been registered of which 132 were approved by the respective programme groups. Half of these were fully funded and under implementation or completed. In addition, there are projects registered separately that were ongoing in 2000, which have been slightly altered to fit the Task Force model, but do not fully fit into the LFA. Peer reviews and quality assurance are on the agenda for 2003. By necessity, this will be a very de-

centralised exercise in which the programme groups will play a pivotal role and much of the work will be done by the persons responsible for the projects. In this way, a maximum of technical skills and knowledge will be transferred, and a high degree of sustainability will be assured.

The total funds for the three-year period are approximately EUR 25 mln. Funding levels have been somewhat uneven from the participating states, but shortage of funds has not hampered the programmes to date. The limited implementing capacity and the need for training and quality assurance made the funding issue less pertinent. Collaboration and improvement of public health depend more

SAFEGUARDING CIVIL SOCIETY

Task Force on organised crime in the Baltic Sea region

BY MICHAEL BOOLSEN, HEAD OF THE TASK FORCE SECRETARIAT

When Denmark on 1 January 2001 took over the Chairmanship of the Task Force on Organised Crime in the Baltic Sea Region it pledged in its working programme for the initial two-year period that its work would be based on three main principles: Coherence, Continuity and Operationality¹.

The aim of the Danish Chairmanship was that, rather than setting too many new ships afloat, we should manage those already set afloat by the previous Swedish Chairmanship and make best use of these initiatives. This said, developments in crime-trends have called for new initiatives but these new initiatives have been implemented with a view to seeking coherence with already existing initiatives both within this forum and within other international fora.

The Danish Chairmanship of the Task Force on Organised Crime in the Baltic Sea Region was extended for the period 2003 – 2004, so we considered

how to continue the Task Force, still basing our work on the three main principles mentioned above. This implies that the continuation of the Danish Chairmanship will not bring a series of new initiatives in its train, as the Chairmanship deems it important to further develop and consolidate existing initiatives.

On a more general level, the Task Force will have to consider the future structure of cooperation following the accession to the European Union of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The Task Force agreed at its meeting in December 2002 to task the Operative Committee to consider this question. These deliberations will be initiated at the next meeting of the Committee, in February 2003.

The Task Force shall do its utmost to be dynamic and adaptive in order to be abreast of development in internation-

al organised crime. Modern and efficient law enforcement cooperation requires the development of structures based on a flexible approach directed towards objectives, (e.g. foreign gangs of criminals operating in Scandinavia and Northern

Germany), rather than types of crime.

Exchange of intelligence has been on the agenda of the Task Force for a long time.

The Chairmanship will in the next two-year period focus on a plan for enhancement of exchange of information. We will pay special attention to the following topics: *Creation of awareness, National coordination of information processing, Definition of information and Legal provisions*. With a view to implement cooperation concerning these issues the Chairmanship will, inter alia, host a seminar concerning exchange of information.

Moreover, joint investigative teams² already form an integrated part of the Task Force

Co-operation. The use of this very valuable instrument can be enhanced. We will monitor the actual use of joint investigative teams closely with a view to discuss suggestions for improvement within the Operative Committee.

In relation to specific areas of crime, the Task Force at its meeting in Tallinn in March 2002 decided that a survey should be conducted concerning competences of the cyber-crime units of the law enforcement authorities of the Task Force member-states. This initiative is based on the Northern e-Dimension Action Plan. On the basis of this survey the Chairmanship decided to hold a seminar for cyber-crime specialists. We will take the initiative to hold meetings for cyber-crime specialists with a view to exchange experiences concerning combating cyber-crime, and we will be open to considering the possibility of operative cooperation in the field of cyber-crime.



¹ Please refer to the Task Force web-site on www.balticseatastaskforce.dk for the full text of the working programme.

² Investigation teams made up of law enforcement officials from various countries working jointly on a criminal case.

Communicable Disease Control in the Baltic Sea Region. Continued from page 6.

on levels of commitment and motivation rather than funding levels, especially if one avoids expensive external experts, if massive construction is not called for, if the actors contribute mostly through their regular positions and if expendables are to be paid out of regular budgets on-site. One problem is that the few actors on the recipient side have to relate to many external agencies: a series of visi-

tors that leave no trace, but also an overlap by the WHO and EU-TACIS as well as regional bodies such as the BEAC and the CBSS. There is not that many persons employed at the local health authorities. The donor side must examine itself and see if it is possible to streamline its approach.

One attempt to improve coordination among donors is under way with the preparation of

a new action plan for the EU Northern Dimension. Prime Minister Lipponen of Finland has advocated the creation of a Northern Dimension partnership for health and social well-being. A working group with a broad composition has been established to prepare an international consultation in Norway in October 2003 with the aim of developing such a partnership. The Task Force will, at the

end of its mandate period, in addition to a final report and a contextual evaluation, also consider alternatives for further regional cooperation in the field of public health. One alternative is to renew the mandate of the Task Force. Another is to merge the Task Force into the EU Northern Dimension. Still other ways to further regional collaboration are conceivable – the discussion has just begun.

Setting the Stage for a New Action Plan. Continued from page 1.

solve its own problems. It is not a region that depends on money from Brussels in order to develop. The tone in the new Guidelines is optimistic – emphasising opportunities and challenges.

Method of work

The Guidelines foresee a division of labour and division of responsibilities with all relevant actors, including the four big regional Councils: The Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the Arctic Council and the

Nordic Council of Ministers. They will be given greater responsibility under the new plan. It will be a challenge for these Councils to pick up this responsibility. The European Commission will coordinate, but the responsibility will be divided among many actors. The dialogue on priorities and coordination of actions require an effective mechanism for exchange of information. Without operational means of coordination, there cannot be a Northern Dimension. New ideas are needed here.

Next steps

During the second quarter of 2003, the European Commission will present a proposal for an Action Plan on the basis of the Guidelines. The plan will be ready for implementation along with the EU enlargement. It is part of the general EU policy to strengthen relations with Russia. Consultations will continue with all partners, in particular with Russia. Russian engagement in this work is a first requirement for success.

With pride and a strong faith in the future. Continued from page 3.

– coordinated for the common good of Northern Europe. The Northern Dimension engages a large number of actors. I am happy to see in the guidelines that the CBSS and the Nordic Council of Ministers are both to take part in the implementation of the Northern Dimension.

Baltinfo: As Chairman of the BSPC Standing Committee, what do you hope to accomplish in the next year? Are you satisfied with the current status of the BSPC in the region and its level of interaction with the CBSS?

Ojala: The Standing Committee has a new composition with new members from Russia, the Nordic countries and the Baltic countries. I hope the Committee will be a good working party with good ideas and will prepare a timely and relevant con-

ference at Oulu, Finland in September 2003. The main themes for the conference will be the knowledge society in the Baltic Sea region, the labour

"I would like to see more cooperation between our organisation and Russian parliamentarians. We have a lot of joint issues that need joint solutions and we parliamentarians need to take the initiative."

market in after the enlargement of the EU and issues of maritime transportation and environmental protection. It is important that we focus our work on really important issues and that we jointly decide upon our goals. The structure of the BSPC is very flexible and the

organisation of the parliamentary conferences relies upon the Standing Committee. The Nordic Council provides secretarial support and the BSPC has no budget of its own. We want to be the parliamentary dimension of the CBSS work and this is an issue we could discuss constructively. We appreciate highly the fact that the CBSS has always been represented at and reported to our annual conferences. There might also be some additional forms of contacts between the governmental and parliamentary sides of Baltic Sea Cooperation. I am happy I could attend the ministerial session marking the 10th anniversary of the CBSS at Kaliningrad in March 2002. The development of our relations has been very encouraging during this year and we are ready to continue in this direction.

Baltic Sea Calendar

FEBRUARY

2–4 St. Petersburg, Russia
CBSS Commissioner Seminar on Pre-Trial Detention in the Baltic Sea Area

5 Helsinki, Finland
CBSS Political Directors meeting

5–6 Helsinki, Finland
CBSS Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) meeting

6–7 Riga, Latvia
CBSS Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety (WGNRS) meeting

6–7 Bialystok, Poland
Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Baltic Sea Commission of the Council on Peripheral and Maritime Regions (BSC-CPMR)

8–10 Vilnius, Lithuania
Meeting of the Baltic Sea Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage

10 Stockholm
Ad-hoc Working Group meeting on Northern Dimension in Social Protection & Health

10–11 Stockholm, Sweden
Senior Officials meeting on Un-accompanied Children from Countries in the CBSS Region

10–11 Stockholm, Sweden
CBSS Commissioner Good Governance Seminar at the Riksdag

11 Helsinki, Finland
Northern Dimension Forum on Labour Market

12 Stockholm, Sweden
CBSS Working Group on Cooperation on Children at Risk (WGCC) meeting

12–13 Helsinki, Finland
Conference on Energy Financing in the Northern Dimension Context

13–14 Tallinn, Estonia
3rd Baltic Sea Conference on Women and Democracy

13–14 Warsaw, Poland
CBSS Ad-hoc Working Group on Transportation meeting

14–15 Helsinki, Finland
3rd Baltic Sea NGO Forum Preparatory Meeting

15 Vilnius, Lithuania
EuroFaculty Governing Board meeting

17–18 Gdansk, Poland
Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation (BSRBCC) meeting of NCC's leaders and experts on security of maritime border check points and seaports

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