

1992 CBSS 1st Ministerial Session - Copenhagen Declaration

Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Baltic Sea States Copenhagen, March 5-6, 1992

I. Introduction

At the invitation of the Danish and German Foreign Ministers, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the representative of the European Commission met in Copenhagen on 5-6 March 1992, in order to strengthen and put into relief existing cooperation among the Baltic Sea States and to decide on the establishment of a "Council of the Baltic Sea States", which will serve as an overall regional forum to focus on needs for intensified cooperation and coordination among the Baltic Sea States. The Ministers viewed this new, emerging cooperation on the basis of the principles laid down in the UN Charter as well as in the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and other OSCE documents.

The Ministers agreed that the recent dramatic changes in Europe herald a new era of European relations where the confrontation and division of the past is replaced by partnership and cooperation. An enhanced and strengthened Baltic cooperation is a natural and logical consequence of these events. The Ministers therefore welcomed the revival of close cooperation among the Baltic Sea States and the strengthening of the ties between them. A number of new and important initiatives taken over the past two years is a clear sign of the willingness to recreate a genuine democratic community around the Baltic Sea.

This cooperation will strengthen the cohesion among these countries, leading to greater political and economic stability as well as a regional identity.

II. Council of the Baltic Sea States

The Ministers decided to establish a "Council of the Baltic Sea States" as a regional undertaking to promote new ideas for cooperation while maintaining close relations with other States and international organizations. An outline of the basic features of the Council is attached to this declaration.

Within the framework of this Council, the Ministers agreed that special attention should be given to the following areas of cooperation:

1. Assistance to new democratic institutions

The Ministers of the Baltic Sea States agreed that democracy is the political system most conducive to individual freedom, respect for human rights, and economic growth. They stressed that they are prepared to protect, support and develop democratic institutions, especially in the new democracies and in this connection reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of the relevant CSCE-documents, including in particular the documents from the meetings in Copenhagen and Moscow on the Human Dimension of the CSCE. In order to enhance their joint endeavours in this respect, the Ministers agreed to cooperate closely with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw as well as with the Council of Europe and other institutions and organizations engaged in human rights activities.

2. Economic and technological assistance and cooperation

Ministers emphasized the importance of promoting the Baltic region as a new zone of growth in Europe, thereby constituting an important step towards further economic integration in Europe as a whole. They underlined the role of the Council as an important forum for discussion and exchange of information about existing and planned cooperation in this field and for formulating new ideas for cooperation.

The Ministers stressed the need for economic assistance in an initial phase in order to facilitate the transition from planned to market economies. The Ministers underlined their intention to promote this assistance.

The Ministers noted that in the new Europe, the market mechanism is the basic principle of economic relations within and between the Baltic Sea States. In this connection they drew attention to the recommendations of the relevant CSCE-documents, including in particular the document from the Conference on Economic Co-operation in Europe, held in Bonn on 19 March - 11 April 1990. They underlined that one of the fundamental prerequisites of stable market economies in all of the Baltic Sea States is the further development of economic and technological cooperation and mutual support at all levels. In this connection, the Ministers stressed the need for increased individual and collective efforts in the field of research and development in order to promote further growth in their productive sectors.

3. Humanitarian matters and health

The Ministers realized that a number of states in the region face urgent and serious problems in connection with the supply of food, medicine and fuel. Ongoing programmes of humanitarian assistance remain vital in the short term to overcome these problems and help safeguard the health of the populations. Efforts should be made to ensure a long term solution of the supply problems.

The Ministers underlined the need for enhancing cooperation in the field of health and social affairs including the prevention of drug abuse.

The Ministers also agreed to pay attention to the causes which may result in a possible increased migration.

4. Protection of the environment and energy

The Ministers expressed their deep concern about the pollution of the Baltic Sea and underlined that cleaning up of the Baltic Sea is a joint responsibility. They noted that the establishment of closer cooperation between their countries creates better possibilities for solving jointly the environmental problems. They noted with satisfaction that this work is progressing well within the Helsinki Commission. They welcomed the initiative of the Governments of Poland and Sweden to organize the Ronneby Conference in September 1990 and the follow-up work on environmental problems. They urged that further joint efforts be undertaken in this area.

The Ministers recognized that cooperation in the field of energy is an integral part of the efforts to improve the environment in the region and to ensure sustainable economic growth. They noted that improved cooperation in the field of energy is essential to ensure the best and most efficient production and use of limited energy resources. They also underlined the high priority of intensified cooperation in energy saving measures.

The Ministers recognized the role of the European Energy Charter in making the fundamental link between energy, environment and economic development.

The Ministers expressed their support for the work within IAEA to enhance nuclear safety

and urged the development of further cooperation in this field. They stressed the need for the strengthening of national nuclear safety institutions and expressed support for more exchange within the Baltic Sea region of know-how and information on these issues. The Ministers also emphasized the need for coordinated efforts in this area within the framework of the Group of 24.

5. Cooperation in the field of culture, education, tourism and information

The Ministers agreed that a fundamental purpose of cooperation in the cultural area, including science and information, is to strengthen the idea of regional identity. They noted that a shared basis cultural heritage - but with different expressions - binds the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea together and forms a fertile starting point for the further development of cultural ties between the participating countries. They expressed their commitment to improve the conditions for reviving former cultural ties and to establish new cultural relations, taking full account of other existing initiatives intended to strengthen the cultural relations in the Baltic Sea area. By its nature, cultural relations should be the result of free and open interchange between individuals and governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The Ministers underlined their commitment to improve people-to-people contacts by stimulating individual personal contacts at all levels in particular youth exchanges. The Ministers emphasized the particular role played by tourism in these efforts.

The Ministers stressed that the creation of the Council of the Baltic Sea States will serve as a pivot of new initiatives in the field of culture, leading to improved mutual understanding and spiritual enrichment through cultural exchanges. In this regard they expressed support for the *Ars Baltica* initiative as a successful model of cultural cooperation.

The Ministers underlined the important role that high-quality education plays in the construction of democratic societies. They therefore stressed the need for further cooperation and exchange as well as special efforts in the field of general and continued education.

6. Transport and communication

The Ministers agreed that the fundamental change of the political and economic geography of Europe has created the need and the possibilities for the establishment of new links and means of transport and communication.

The Ministers recognized the need to envision a new transport and communication structure in the region and to improve and enhance infrastructure, taking into account the environmental situation, among the Baltic Sea States in order to fully utilize the vast potential of the new economic and political situation and ensure a favourable climate for private investment in this field. They stressed that development in the field of transport and communication is a fundamental necessity for increased trade and cooperation. In this connection, they welcomed the invitation of the Governments of Poland and Sweden for a Baltic Conference on Transportation to be held in Szczecin on 1-18 March 1992.

III. Cooperation among regions in the Baltic Sea area

The Ministers underlined the importance of cooperation among the regions in the Baltic Sea area. A successful cooperation around the Baltic Sea area needs active participation of political decision-makers at all levels. There are many ways to realize regional cooperation, depending on the various issues and the partners involved. The Council of the Baltic Sea

States will encourage regional initiatives, public or private, as long as they contribute to the general aim of this cooperation.

IV. Follow-up

The Council of the Baltic Sea States charged a Committee of Senior Officials to consider ways to implement the ideas included in this declaration, giving particular attention to the issues of assistance to new democratic institutions and economic and technological assistance and cooperation. The Committee of Senior Officials will hold its first meeting in Helsinki at an early date. A further meeting in Tallinn will follow soon thereafter.

At the invitation of the Government of Finland, the next meeting of the Council of the Baltic Sea States will take place in Helsinki in March 1993.