

1998 CBSS 7th Ministerial Session - Nyborg Communiqué

Communiqué of the 7th Ministerial Session of the CBSS, Nyborg, 22-23rd June 1998.

1. At the invitation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Foreign Ministers of CBSS countries, members of the European Commission and the Presidency of the European Union represented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom met on 22-23 June in Nyborg for their 7th Ministerial Session of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS).

Representatives of France and United States of America, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine participated in the session.

2. The Council welcomed the increased awareness of regional identity and cultural heritage in the Baltic Sea Region. This development contributes to intensify the co-operation between the CBSS countries and to sustain a stable democratic Europe in which respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms prevail.

The Council reiterated, that co-operation and security are in particular based on common principles and adherence to the OSCE as well as on commitments of the states to the UN Charter

The highlight during the Danish Presidency of the CBSS was the convening of the second summit of the Heads of Government of the Baltic Sea States in Riga on January 22-23th 1998 which gave important impetus to co-operation in the region.

3. The inclusion of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland in the EU enlargement process and the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the Russian Federation and the European Union. will enhance the cooperation between all countries of the Baltic Sea Region including the members of the European Economic Area. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement has added a new quality to relations with Russia, including the perspective of a future free-trade agreement between the EU and Russia.

In this context the Council welcomes the initiative for a Northern Dimension of the European Union. This initiative will strengthen already ongoing CBSS activities, in the fields of i.a. environment, trade, transportation and energy. The success of regional co-operation initiatives is firmly based on a principle of inclusiveness and openness.

The Council noted with appreciation that the co-operation between the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Baltic Sea States had developed successfully and noted with satisfaction the intention to increase considerably the funds to the Special Joint Programme.

4. With reference to the action programmes for Baltic Sea States co-operation, the incoming Danish Presidency at the 6th Ministerial Session in Riga in July 1997 announced six priority areas:

- a) democratic participation and human rights;
- b) economic development and social affairs;
- c) civic security;

- d) education;
- e) environment and nuclear safety and
- f) institutional strengthening of the CBSS.

a. The CBSS Commissioner on Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Including the Rights of Persons Belonging to Minorities has worked closely together with the Presidency. The Council expressed its appreciation of this co-operation encompassing also relevant bodies of the CBSS.

The Council called on the CBSS Commissioner to continue to devote special attention to the question of democratic participation, in particular by persons belonging to minorities in all countries of the Baltic Sea Region, as well as to the rights and obligations of personnel in the armed services, to the problems related to border-crossing of individuals, representing a constraint to economic co-operation and growth in the region, and to independent and pluralistic media. It welcomed the intention of the CEES Commissioner to give priority to and co-ordinate his efforts in the media field with the EU, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media.

The Council welcomed the results of the Round Table on Current Issues of Democracy and Human Rights held in Copenhagen in February 1998 at the initiative of the CBSS Commissioner and in co-operation with other CBSS bodies. The Council also noted with satisfaction that the report on Combating Commercial sexual exploitation of children has resulted in initiatives to arrange seminars with a view to raising the awareness of the issue among the relevant decision makers

The Council underlined the importance of the CBSS Commissioners recommendations for the protection and promotion of Human Rights through out the Baltic Sea Region and their implementation.

The Council stressed the importance of combating illegal immigration and called for the signing of readmission agreements between the countries in the region.

b. The Council, referring to the Riga Summit Presidency Declaration of January 1998, stressed the importance of the creation of favourable conditions for promoting intraregional trade and the strengthening of economic growth in the region. The Council recalled the reports presented to the Summit in Riga in January 1998 by the Baltic Sea Business Advisory Council, BAC, and the Second Baltic Sea Business Summit. The Council asked the relevant bodies of the CBSS to continue their efforts to review the implementation of these and other high level declarations and documents. Special emphasis should be attributed to the further removal of administrative barriers to trade and investments, to improvements in the field of infrastructure (such as transport, energy and telecommunication) and to the creation of a favourable framework for small and medium sized enterprises as well as to raise the awareness of the international organisations, multilateral fora and international financial institutions for the promotion of the Baltic Sea Development.

In this regard the Council welcomed the outcome of second meeting of the ministers of industry and economic affairs in Gdansk on 19-20 March 1998.

The Council welcomed the findings of the conference in Copenhagen in January 1998 between investment financing institutions and funds operating in the region, which will assist in creating a favourable overall investment climate in the CBSS countries.

The Council welcomed the setting up of the consultative and advisory body, BALTREL (Baltic Ring Electricity Co-operation Committee) and looks forward to the forthcoming conference to be hosted by Norway on sustainable energy supply, integration of energy markets and networking in the Baltic region.

Recognising the significant contribution from the small and medium sized enterprises, SME's, to the development of the Baltic Sea Region the Council welcomed the initiative to convene a conference in Vilnius on 9-10 July 1998 between ministers of trade.

The Council requested the relevant bodies of the CBSS to include in the work programme initiatives to extend existing EU and Nordic co-operation on Information Technology to the entire Baltic Sea Region and welcomed the intentions of Denmark and Sweden to support such initiatives.

The Council welcomed the outcome of the Ministerial conference in Copenhagen on 18-19 May 1998 and the results of the discussions within the relevant bodies of the CBSS concerning labour market policies bearing in mind the challenges of the EU enlargement process. They also underlined the importance of building sustainable social systems in all countries of the region.

c. Recalling the statement of the Heads of Government in Riga, the Council confirmed the necessity of giving priority to co-operation on civic security, and took note of the statement from the conference on this subject hosted by the Danish Presidency in Århus on 8-9 June 1998 opening for new initiatives, and welcomed that Sweden, Lithuania and Norway convenes a follow up conference in Visby on September 8-9th. 1998. The Council called on the relevant national authorities to actively engage in joint activities within the specific areas covered by the conference: rescue at sea, surveillance of sea environment and fighting pollution, monitoring of dangerous (non radioactive) goods, training of rescue and fire-fighting personnel and mutual assistance in case of serious calamities, monitoring of persons, goods and mean of transportation in relation to illegal trade, nuclear safety and emergency management.

The Council welcomed the active ongoing regional co-operation on combating organised crime, based on the report of the Task Force on Organised Crime submitted to the Riga Summit in January 1998. The Council noted that the mandate of the Task Force was extended by the Riga Summit until the end of 1998 and underlined the importance that this co-operation will continue with the same intensity in the future.

d. The Council underlined the role that the EuroFaculty and other jointly financed education projects should play in removing one of the bottlenecks in the continued transformation process in CBSS countries, in particular in order to prepare for EU membership: the shortage of relevant university graduates. The Council stressed that the establishment of a future financial basis for the EuroFaculty with a broadened donor base ensuring financial stability was crucial, if the EuroFaculty should play a key role in the continued strengthening of the institutional and administrative capacity in the countries concerned. The Council welcomed the appointment of the new director of EuroFaculty.

In this context the Council also took note of the development of "Ars Baltica." Since 1990 this cultural initiative has become a new model of multilateral cultural co-operation within the Baltic Sea Region.

e. The Council appreciated the new commitments made by ministers of environment at their special session during the 19th. meeting of the Helsinki Commission in March 1998 such as new provisions of the Helsinki Convention to reduce the pollution from agriculture as well as from illegal discharges from ships at sea, a far reaching HELCOM objective and strategy concerning the phasing out of hazardous substances. Also the up-dating and strengthening of the Joint Comprehensive Action Programme, intensification of the monitoring of the environmental performance and compliance within the Helsinki convention together with the decision on review during 1998 of HELCOM structures, procedures and programmes to reflect the changing political and economic context and environmental challenges were welcomed.

The Council adopted the Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region (Baltic 21)

The Council endorsed the major commitments, goals and the action programme in Baltic 21 and resolved to ensure an efficient implementation process of Baltic 21 thereby expressing the determination to

- pursue the overall goal for sustainable development and the specific goals for sustainable development in agriculture, energy, fishery, forestry, industry, tourism, transport and spatial planning as well as to integrate environmental issues into sector and spatial planning policies.
- ensure that the implementation process concentrates on gaps and areas not sufficiently dealt with elsewhere
- give responsibility to the sectors to implement the action programme and to
- follow up of the progress in moving towards the goals of SustainableDevelopment;

The Council expressed its appreciation of the contribution to the Baltic 21 process from i.a. HELCOM, IBSFC, V ASAB and the International Financing Institutions as well as from the participating NGO's and invited them to continue contributing to the implementation of Baltic 21

The Council requested the Senior Officials Group to continue its work in co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation process. The Council also endorsed the commitments to act as lead parties for the sectors as follows: Poland and HELCOM concerning agriculture, Denmark and Estonia concerning energy, the International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission concerning fishery, Finland and Lithuania concerning forestry, Sweden and the Russian Federation concerning industry, HELCOM and the Baltic Tourism Commission concerning tourism and Germany and Latvia concerning transport.

The Council requested the Senior Officials Group to report at regular intervals to appropriate bodies of Baltic Sea co-operation, including environment ministers, ministerial sessions of the CBSS and Heads of Government meetings. In particular ministers expressed the view that the implementation of the Baltic 21 should be examined when ministers of environment meet in relation to other Baltic Sea regional activities directly connected to the scope of Baltic 21, such as the HELCOM review, IBSFC, V ASAB and the EU dimension. The Council

requested the Presidency to inform the Conference "Environment for Europe, Århus, Denmark, June 23-25, 1998, on the decision by the CBSS on Baltic 21

f. The Council confirmed the decision to establish a permanent secretariat of the CBSS in Stockholm. The secretariat shall provide technical and administrative support to the Council and be a focal point of information. The Council welcomed Mr. Jacek Starosciak as Head of the Secretariat.

5. The Council took note of the strengthening of the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation (BSSSC) structure and the increasing engagement of the sub-regions in Baltic Sea co-operation. The Council called upon the BSSSC and the respective actors to continue their interregional and cross-border co-operation, enhancing economic and social coherence in the area. The Council also welcomed the initiatives of the BSSSC and the UBC to engage their participants actively in the EU pre accession process. The Council encouraged BSSSC and Union of Baltic Cities (UBC) to contribute to the process of implementation of Baltic 21.

The Council considered that further efforts on decentralisation of the economies in transition useful and in this context, welcomed the outcome of the Conference on Decentralisation Reforms, held in Copenhagen November 26-27th 1997.

Referring to a meeting of ministers of Youth on 5-6 June 1998 in Visby, the Council also took note of the proposal for creation of a Baltic Sea Youth Foundation and encouraged the BSSSC to work upon a feasibility study as a first step.

6. The Council noted with appreciation the active support and interest of national parliaments of the Baltic Sea states, the Parliamentary Conference on Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Area and the Nordic Council with regard to the activities of the CBSS.

7. The Council thanked Denmark for chairing the CBSS during 1997-98 and for organising the 7th Ministerial Session in Nyborg. The Council entrusted Lithuania with the Presidency for the period 1998-99. During this period the Troika will be composed by Lithuania, Denmark and Norway. The 8th Session of CBSS will be held in Lithuania in 1999.

8. The Council expressed its appreciation of the contributions and reports of participating guests.