

## **1993 CBSS 2nd Ministerial Session - Helsinki Communiqué**

### **Council of the Baltic Sea States SECOND MINISTERIAL SESSION HELSINKI 16-17 MARCH 1993**

#### **COMMUNIQUÉ**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

At the invitation of the Foreign Minister of Finland, the Council - Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the Commission of the European Communities - met in Helsinki for its second Ministerial session on March 16-17, 1993. The Council expressed its appreciation for the Finnish Chairmanship during the first year.

1. The Council recognized that political developments in the new and restored democracies of the region have been positive, thus contributing to stability and security in the region.

2. The Council examined the progress made in cooperation among member countries since their first session in Copenhagen on March 5-6, 1992, and the report submitted by the Committee of Senior Officials. The Council discussed issues where cooperation among the Baltic Sea States would best contribute to progress and economic development in the area and in Europe as a whole.

3. The Council welcomed, as important contributions to the development of the Baltic Sea Region, the assistance provided by the G-24 to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, through international cooperation with Russia, through international financial institutions and through bilateral channels. It observed that member countries are providing technical and economic assistance to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia bilaterally and the EC through its Phare and Tacis programmes.

#### **II. CONCLUSIONS OF THE COUNCIL**

4. The Council is continuing its efforts in line with CSCE principles to support progress towards democracy, and respect for and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. The Council adopted priority areas for support for democratic institutions in the region, including assistance for the establishment of legal and administrative structures and support for the promotion of democratic culture and values in all spheres of civic life.

The Council endorsed in principle the idea to establish a post of a CBSS Commissioner for

Human Rights and Minorities Questions. It charged the Committee of Senior Officials and the Working Group on Assistance to Democratic Institutions, in cooperation with relevant CSCE institutions, to continue their work on this issue with a view to elaborating a specific mandate for the Commissioner taking into account the need to avoid duplication with other activities in this field.

5. The Council will continue to support the implementation of concrete projects on the basis of priorities established by common agreement. It will concentrate its efforts on areas which complement the respective work of European and multi-lateral organizations and institutions and on private sector initiatives, thereby avoiding duplication of work. The Council proposed that an early meeting be arranged with representatives of the international financial institutions in order to promote projects of regional interest.

6. The Council noted efforts to assist the withdrawing Russian troops from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, including social and housing assistance to the withdrawn personnel and their families.

7. The Council decided to establish a "Euro-faculty" in Riga in cooperation with the universities of Tartu and Vilnius. The "Euro-faculty" will provide training for students and professors from the countries in the region in the fields of public and business administration, law and economic sciences. The universities of Aarhus, Hamburg, Helsinki, Kiel, Münster and Oslo, the Norwegian School of Management as well as a Swedish University or Business School will be involved in the project. The project will be carried out within the framework of the EC "Tempus" scheme, with initial contributions targeted at about 2,5 mill. ECU by the member countries. A group consisting of professors from the universities concerned will steer the project.

8. The Council gave high priority to the medium and long-term development of infrastructure - roads, railroads, ports, tele-communications and energy networks - as being essential for economic progress in the area. It considered that emphasis on regional infrastructure projects would attract private investment and would help to promote regional trade. The Council noted the preparation of the "Via Baltica" and other transport projects in the region. The Council welcomed steps taken to improve telecommunications in the area.

9. The Council noted with satisfaction that existing and envisaged bilateral agreements between member states regarding trade, investment protection and double taxation help to create a favourable climate for business activities and foreign investment in the region. The Council also encouraged the further elaboration of legal and institutional frameworks favourable to the promotion of private enterprise and foreign direct investment in the countries in transition. It stressed the need to improve conditions for trade and movement of goods in the Baltic Sea area, e.g. by revising customs procedures and regulations.

The Council invited the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce association to present a memorandum with detailed recommendations to be examined by the Committee of Senior Officials based on experiences of enterprises and private business associations in the Baltic

Sea area.

Furthermore, it encouraged the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association and other Chambers of Commerce, and private and public organizations to further improve their cooperation, with the objective of promoting trade and providing management know-how and other information and training, especially to the business communities of the economies in transition.

10. The Council recognized the urgency of promoting cooperation in the area of humanitarian matters and health. The Council stressed the need to intensify regional cooperation in combatting drug abuse and drug trafficking: a high-level meeting is planned to be held in Tallinn on May 18-19, 1993. The Council took note of the food aid programmes currently being implemented by the G-24 and the programmes being carried out in Russia, and in this connection encouraged the use of triangular trade operations.

11. The Council underlined its continuing concern about nuclear and radiation safety in the Baltic Sea region. Risk of contamination of the region 5 environment by radioactive substances is a serious matter and all practical measures to minimize these risks merit strong support, e.g. through inter-national cooperation and advances in technology for the handling, storage and disposal of radioactive waste and the operational safety of nuclear facilities. The Council supports ongoing international cooperative projects to improve the safety of RBMK and VVER nuclear power plants. The Council has taken note of the intermediate report of the Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety and concludes that implementation of the specific recommendations put forward in this report shall begin urgently. The Council invited the working group on nuclear safety to continue its work.

12. The Council stressed the importance of further promoting cooperation with and among the sub-regions around the Baltic Sea as an indispensable basis for a growing regional identity. It noted the promising discussions at the economic meeting with sub-region representatives held in St. Petersburg on October 27, 1992.

### **III. RELATED INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

13. The Council noted with satisfaction the increasing contacts and exchange of information with parliamentary bodies in the area, in line with the desire expressed by the participants in the second Conference of Baltic Sea parliamentary representatives, held in Oslo on April 24-25, 1992. It noted with satisfaction that the next conference will take place in Warsaw-Gdansk on June 3-5, 1993.

14. The Council welcomed the results of the meeting of the Helsinki Commission on Environment Protection on April 7-9, 1992, especially the 1992 Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea, the adoption of the comprehensive programme for combatting pollution in the area and the establishment of a working group of the Helsinki Commission on the issue of dumped chemical weapons. It expressed the hope that the Ministerial meeting in Gdansk in March 1993 will find ways of assuring implementation of

this programme.

15. The Council took note of follow-up to the first Conference of Ministers of Transport of the Baltic Sea states, held in Szczecin on March 17-18, 1992.

16. The Council noted with satisfaction further progress in the "Ars Baltica" initiative to revive the common cultural heritage of the Baltic region, to establish new links and to promote cultural cooperation.

The Council hopes that the Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea States, to be held in Stockholm, on May 10-11, 1993 will create new impetus in this field.

The Council also noted that cooperation between radio/TV companies based in the Baltic Sea area had been initiated in Helsinki in June, 1992 and welcomed the decision to establish a Centre for writers and translators from the Baltic Sea States on the Island of Gotland, Sweden. The Council further noted the forthcoming first Baltic Sea Games in Estonia in June/July 1993 and the Baltic Art festival in August 1993.

17. The Council welcomed the establishment of the Council of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region as an important new step towards fuller cooperation in Europe.

18. The Council welcomed as an important contribution to long-term development of the Baltic Sea region the initiative to formulate a document called "Vision and strategies for the Baltic Sea region 2010", launched at a ministerial meeting in Karlskrona, Sweden, on August 22, 1992, which will be discussed at a meeting of the relevant ministers in Gdansk in the autumn of 1993.

19. A number of concrete regional energy projects have been defined by the G-24 in Tallinn on 4-5 March, 1993. The Council noted that these projects will be further examined at a workshop in Copenhagen in June 1993 and at a new G-24 meeting in the Baltic Sea states within a year.

20. The Council noted the announcement of the Swedish Foreign Minister, that Sweden, within the framework of the Baltic Sea Cooperation, intends to arrange a constituent meeting on the issue of "uncontrolled migration across the Baltic Sea".

21. The Council noted an important initiative on a high-level Regional Conference, to be arranged by the Government of Finland and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Helsinki, May 11-12, 1993. The purpose of the Conference is to analyze the perspectives of international migration, social and economic development, and migration in the Baltic Sea region as a basis for further research and regional cooperation.

#### **IV. PERSPECTIVES**

22. The Council will continue to address questions of particular importance for the development of the region and to focus on issues that will strengthen regional identity.

The Council is convinced that growing cooperation, dialogue and stability in the Baltic Sea region is of significance for the whole CSCE process. This will contribute substantially to advances in European cooperation and integration as an essential element in the new European architecture.

23. The Council instructed the Committee of Senior Officials to continue to study and report on ways and means of giving further impetus to the activities of the CBSS as a regional coordination body, according to the priorities set out in the Copenhagen Declaration and taking emerging new areas of cooperation into account.

24. At the invitation of the Government of Estonia, the next meeting of the Council of the Baltic Sea States will take place in Tallinn in March 1994.