

## **Declaration**

**by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Sweden and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the participation by the Russian Federation and Belarus in the work of the Council of the Baltic Sea States**

**3 March 2022**

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) was established in 1992 in order to serve as overall regional forum for cooperation and coordination among the Baltic Sea States. The founding decision – the Copenhagen Declaration - emphasized cooperation on the basis of the UN Charter as well as the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and other OSCE documents. Subsequent political decisions have confirmed the aims of peace, cohesion and democracy, most recently expressed in the Vilnius II Declaration of 1 June 2021 - A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2030.

These fundamental principles and aims have now been dramatically violated by the unprovoked and illegal military attack and aggression committed by the Russian Federation against sovereign and democratic Ukraine.

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the High Representative strongly condemn Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine. Nothing can justify Russia's illegal use of force. We must now draw the necessary conclusions. We see no possibility to continue our cooperation as envisaged with the Russian Federation within the framework of the CBSS. In the current circumstances Russia should not enjoy the benefits of, and participation in, any CBSS-led cooperation. We will ensure the suspension of Russia from the proceedings, work and projects of the CBSS and its working bodies until cooperation under the fundamental principles of international law has become possible again.

At the same time we suspend the participation in activities of the Republic of Belarus as a CBSS observer state. We condemn Belarus' involvement in Russia's aggression against Ukraine. By allowing Russia to use its territory for aggression against Ukraine, Belarus itself is responsible for an act of aggression.

We acknowledge the important contribution of the CBSS to regional cohesion and cooperation. The Norwegian CBSS Presidency in close coordination with the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials will ensure the proper adjustment of the operation of the organisation in these changed circumstances.

Our decision takes immediate effect and shall be duly communicated to all stakeholders and strategic partners of the CBSS.

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