

**THE SECOND SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING
OF THE RENEWED NORTHERN DIMENSION
(Stockholm, November 12, 2009)**

CHAIRMAN' S CONCLUSIONS

The second Senior Officials meeting of the renewed Northern Dimension took place in Stockholm on November 12, 2009. The meeting was hosted by Sweden, holding the EU Presidency.

The meeting took place with the participation at Deputy Foreign Minister or equivalent level of the four Partners: the European Union, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation. Also representatives of the Regional Councils in the North, the International Financial Institutions (IFI) and other institutions and bodies of the Northern Dimension Partners participated. Representatives of the USA and Canada took part in the meeting as observers.

The participants of the meeting reviewed the implementation of the Joint Statement of the first Ministerial meeting of the renewed Northern Dimension (Saint-Petersburg, October 28, 2008) and noted the substantial progress that had been made with regard to the issues covered by the Joint Statement.

The participants of the meeting took note of the information of the European Investment Bank (EIB) as the Chair of the Steering Group of the **Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP)** and of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) as the manager of the NDEP Support Fund on the activities of the Partnership.

The Senior Officials noted that the NDEP remains a key vehicle for addressing major sources of cross border pollution, primarily in the catchment area of the Baltic Sea. They noted the NDEP's successful efforts to expand the project pipeline and welcomed the recommendation of the NDEP Steering Group that the NDEP mandate be extended for another five years beyond 2012. They also noted the severe delays in some projects and that the NDEP was seeking a constructive resolution of the problems at hand. In this regard, they recalled that a final decision on the EUR 10 million grant for the waste water treatment plant in Kaliningrad will be taken by the meeting of the Assembly of Contributors on 30 November 2009 and that a determined effort is needed before that in order for the project to be successfully implemented.

The participants of the meeting took note of the information of the Norwegian Chairmanship of the **Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS)** on the activities of the Partnership.

The Senior Officials welcomed the recommendations given by the NDPHS Strategy Working Group and in particular as regards the setting of time limited targets to help focus the work on tangible results and to facilitate efforts to increase the visibility of the Partnership's activities and achievements. Taking into account the importance of the issues covered by the NDPHS and the timeliness of the recommendations by the Strategy Working Group they looked forward to the Partnership Annual Conference to be held in Oslo on 25 November 2009 and to a renewed political commitment to the Partnership.

The Senior Officials welcomed the offer by Russia and Finland to assume the Chairmanship and Co-Chairmanship of the NDPHS for 2010-2011. They called on the governing bodies of the Partnership to intensify their efforts to reach an agreement on the modalities of establishing the Secretariat of the Partnership.

The Senior Officials welcomed the signing in Naples on 21 October 2009 of a Memorandum of Understanding setting out the modalities of establishing the **Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL)**.

The Senior Officials noted that the next step would be for the Parties to the NDPTL to set up a Steering Committee as envisaged in the Memorandum of Understanding. They urged the Parties to reach a legally binding agreement on the organizational structure and budget of the NDPTL with the view of concluding preparations by the time of the second ND Ministerial meeting to be convened in the second half of 2010. They welcomed the offer by the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB) to open a Trust Fund on account of the NDPTL to which contributions can be paid by interested parties to allow a start of activities already in 2010.

The Senior Officials decided to establish the **Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC)**, based on the recommendations of the ND Steering Group and the conclusions of the *ad-hoc* Expert Group.

The main objective of the new Partnership will be to function as a focal point for networks, projects and other cultural activities in the ND area with a view to keeping interested actors continuously informed of plans and activities and for avoiding overlap. The Partnership stands ready to provide a platform for exchange of information and best practices, for promoting coordination and cultural cooperation between the four Regional Councils in the North and for facilitating a dialogue between cultural actors and the business community with a view to fostering cooperation and the development of the creative economy.

The Senior Officials instructed the ND Steering Group to convene a Preparatory Committee to finalise the organisational structure of the NDPC with the aim to make it fully operational by the time of the second ND Ministerial meeting. They appreciated the valuable support given by the Nordic Council of Ministers during the preparatory phase and its generous decision to increase its support for 2010. In this context, they welcomed the initiative to hold a conference for the launch of the NDPC in Saint Petersburg in the spring of 2010.

The participants of the meeting welcomed the establishment of the **Northern Dimension Institute (NDI)**, based on the conclusions of the ND Steering Group and the ND Institute Development Group. They appreciated the report by the initiators of the Institute, the Saint Petersburg State University and the Lappeenranta University of Technology, and urged them to continue their work as outlined in their report.

The NDI is an open network of universities and research institutes with expertise in the priority sectors of the Northern Dimension policy, notably in the fields of energy, the environment, public health, transport, logistics as well as culture and higher education. By keeping close contact with developments in the ND policy, the NDI aims to facilitate the creation of new research partnerships and the conduct of research of high policy relevance. The participants of the meeting encouraged further efforts to broaden participation in the Institute to include more universities in the ND area and beyond.

The Senior Officials welcomed the initiative to create a **Northern Dimension Business Council (NDBC)** and encouraged the initiators to continue preparations on its establishment on the basis of the concept paper presented, and to start activities when the co-chairmen consider that preparatory work has been completed.

The Senior Officials expressed appreciation of the **meeting convened by Russia with the Chairs of the four Regional Councils and Partners of the Northern Dimension** in Saint-Petersburg on 30 September 2009. They welcomed the valuable proposals presented on how to develop further cooperation at various levels, while emphasising the potential for closer synergies by more effectively using existing formats of cooperation. Recalling the objective of the Northern Dimension policy “to enhance regional cooperation, improving synergies of regional organisations in the North of Europe”, they called on the four Regional Councils to consider using the Northern Dimension as a forum to discuss issues related to the cooperation between themselves.

In light of the decision of the European Council on 29-30 October 2009 to adopt an **EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region** the Senior Officials underlined the role of the Northern Dimension as a useful framework for discussing possible constructive cooperation between the EU and the other ND Partners. They took note of the exchanges of view that had taken place in the context of the ND Steering Group and instructed it to explore possible areas of mutual interest and how cooperation in such areas could be taken forward.

The Senior Officials recalled the proposal originally made by the Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (BSSSC) to create **a sub-regional/sub-state dimension to the Northern Dimension policy** and confirmed the desirability of an active involvement in the Northern Dimension policy of the organisations representing the sub-regional level in the ND area. In this context, they welcomed the meeting of the Committee of the Regions to be convened in Helsingborg on 26-27 November, 2009 as an opportunity to advance the discussion on how local and regional authorities of the Northern Dimension Partners wish to interact on issues of common concern, with a view to making concrete proposals to the Northern Dimension decision making organs.

The participants instructed the Steering Group to consider ways to develop **the ND Arctic Window** without duplicating work within the mandates of the Arctic Council or the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. In particular, they noted that further consideration would be

needed on how indigenous peoples could be included in the deliberations on the ND Arctic Window.

The Senior Officials welcomed the recommendation of the NDEP Steering Group to the NDEP Assembly of Contributors meeting on 30 November 2009 to include **Belarus** as a prospective beneficiary of NDEP resources. They also welcomed the participation of Belarus in the ND Partnership on Transport and Logistics and expressed their readiness to consider participation of Belarus in other partnerships and initiatives.

They welcomed and considered the application of Belarus to obtain observer status in the Northern Dimension. They instructed the ND Steering Group to further consider the matter with a view to a Ministerial decision without delay and possible amendments to the ND Policy Framework Document, if need be through written procedure, and at the latest by the next ND Ministerial meeting.

The European Union, Iceland and Russia took note of the Norwegian proposal to convene the **next Ministerial meeting** in Oslo in the autumn of 2010.