

**GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POLITICAL DECLARATION AND
A POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT
FOR THE NORTHERN DIMENSION POLICY FROM 2007**

I) INTRODUCTION

1. Established in 1999, the Northern Dimension (ND) policy aimed at providing a common framework for the promotion of dialogue and concrete cooperation, strengthening stability, wellbeing and sustainable development in northern Europe. The Northern Dimension covers a broad geographic area stretching from the Arctic and Sub-Arctic to the southern shores of the Baltic, and from North-West Russia in the east to Iceland and Greenland in the west. The ND focus increasingly in North West Russia, the largest territory covered by the ND policy, with its specific challenges affecting also the other ND parties. The ND policy is now becoming a joint project of its parties and should ensure that no dividing lines are re-established in the North of Europe.
2. The ND parties are the EU Member States, the Russian Federation, Norway, Iceland and the European Commission. The Northern Dimension provides also a frame of reference for intensified transatlantic cooperation of the ND parties in matters concerning the northern regions of the world, through the observer status of USA and Canada.
3. The regional organizations in the North of Europe, i.e. the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), and The Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) are important actors embracing a wide range of cooperation in their respective geographical area. The ND aims to enhance the synergies of these organizations, maximizing the use of the resources available for the region, while avoiding any possible overlapping. The Arctic Council (AC), with a wider geographical coverage, maintains strong links and shared objectives with the European regional organizations in the North and with the Northern Dimension. All four Northern regional organizations identify needs for development and cooperation in their respective areas and support project implementation in different ways.

4. The sub-national, regional and local entities have an important role in the implementation of projects and activities, in line with the principle of subsidiarity. The International Financial Institutions active in the North, as well as civil society in general, particularly the business sector and non-governmental organisations are relevant ND actors which have provided important contributions to the implementation of the ND policy.
5. The Kaliningrad oblast with its particular geographical situation as well as the extensive Arctic and Sub-arctic areas, notably those of North West Russia are priority areas for the ND policy. Assuring the full economic and social integration of these priority areas within the dynamics of the ND region while preserving at the same time national sovereignty is a ND objective.
6. At present there are two Partnerships within the ND framework: the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP) and The Northern Dimension Partnership in Health and Social Wellbeing (NDPHS). The NDEP has proved to be a success by combining efforts and commitment of ND parties and by establishing a model of cooperation between international financial institutions. Its Fund has allowed the implementation of important environmental projects. The NDEP may be considered as a pattern for future Partnerships.
7. A permanent flow of information is a key element of the Northern Dimension policy. All ND stakeholders should provide update information concerning their projects, either bilateral or multilateral, to the ND Information System. The ND annual reports should be endorsed jointly by all ND parties.

II) A NORTHERN DIMENSION POLICY FROM 2007 ONWARDS

8. Taking account of the enlargement of the European Union (EU) in May 2004 and the adoption of the Road Maps for the four Common Spaces between the EU and the Russian Federation in May 2005, the ND requires some reshaping in order to better fit into the new operational environment. While keeping the broad geographical coverage, the ND policy should be used as a political and operational framework for promoting the implementation of the EU-Russia Common Spaces at regional/sub-regional/local level in the North with full participation of Norway and Iceland. In addition, Belarus could be encouraged to participate in expert level cooperation in the ND framework.

9. The new ND should be considered therefore as a regional expression of the Common Spaces. Therefore, the new ND policy framework should identify areas of cooperation where a regional emphasis would bring added value. However it should continue to include some additional objectives of specific relevance in the North, i.e. its fragile environment, indigenous peoples' issues, health and social well being, etc. Russia and the EU are invited to make ND a cross-cutting topic where appropriate for the dialogues launched or considered within the framework of implementation of the road maps.

Cooperation Sectors

10. The current ND cooperation areas (economy, business and infrastructure; human resources, education, culture, scientific research, and health; the environment, nuclear safety and natural resources; cross-border cooperation and regional development; justice and home affairs) should be re-focused in line with the Common Spaces as described in § 9 above.
11. The following ND sector division could be established:
- *Economic cooperation* (promotion of trade, investments and business level cooperation, and development of the energy, transport and information technology infrastructure);
 - *Freedom, Security and Justice* (facilitation of people-to-people contacts, prevention of trafficking in human beings, drugs trafficking, illegal immigration and other cross-border crime, development of border monitoring, rescue services and good governance, and the efficiency of the judicial system);
 - *External security* (civilian crisis management);
 - *Research, education and culture* (increased cooperation and exchange programmes, people-to-people contacts);
 - *Environment, nuclear safety and natural resources*: (reduction of the risk of nuclear and other pollution, marine safety, protection of the Arctic ecosystems and biodiversity, forests and fish stocks; cooperation in the field of water policy, supporting a fruitful continuation of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership and its support fund);
 - *Social welfare and health care*: (prevention of communicable diseases and life-style related diseases, supporting the work of the Partnership in Health and Social Wellbeing).

The areas for cooperation should be developed jointly, taking account of the interests of all ND stakeholders.

12. While maintaining the comprehensive ND nature and underlying its main objective of becoming the privileged forum for discussing the challenges of northern Europe, its cooperation activities should focus on a realistic number of themes to be decided jointly in order to maximize the use of the limited resources.
13. Cross-border cooperation should continue to be a cross-cutting theme producing added value at the sub-regional and trans-national level, enhancing regional development, the involvement of civil society and people-to-people contacts keeping in mind the objective of visa free travel between the EU and Russia as stipulated in the St. Petersburg Summit of May 2003. The ND also promotes the development of national and regional strategies for sustainable development, in line with internationally recognized principles, as well as good governance, transparency and participation, gender equality, the rights of minorities, social cohesion, non-discrimination, the protection of indigenous peoples and supports the further strengthening of civil society and democratic institutions.

Implementation and Monitoring

14. The structures of cooperation mechanisms under the ND will be agreed upon by the ND Parties at a later stage. It is clear that they will function at Ministerial and Senior Officials level and will provide policy guidance and monitoring. The agendas of all the meetings within the ND framework should be prepared in full consultation of all ND parties.
15. ND activities are implemented by various actors and financed from different sources, such as the existing EU financing programmes, national budgets, international regional organizations, international financial institutions, regional and local public organizations, other public bodies, such as universities, and private sources, including civil society. As far as the EU is concerned, from 2007 on, the new European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) should be a central source of EU financing for ND activities, notably focussing on cross-border cooperation, along the lines of the relevant EU-Russia financial cooperation arrangements to be developed. The ND should also benefit from other applicable EU programmes.”

16. Adequate financial support is an important factor for the efficient functioning of the ND policy. The principle of co-financing from the EU, Russia, other ND parties, as well as from international (EIB, EBRD ...) and private financial institutions where appropriate, should be the general rule.

III) THE NEW POLITICAL DECLARATION AND FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT TO BE ADOPTED IN 2006

17. The new ND basic texts should be negotiated and adopted jointly by the EU, the Russian Federation, Norway and Iceland, leading to a consolidated common Northern Dimension policy, to which the parties should provide their full commitment. They should consist of a joint political declaration and a framework policy document stating the objectives and identifying the necessary structures for achieving them. The ND document should be considered a common achievement which could be agreed in the second half of 2006 and enter into force in 2007.
18. The new ND political declaration and framework policy document should have a permanent nature. Nevertheless it would be important to ensure regular reviews. All ND parties and actors should provide their assessment to the ND meetings in order to facilitate the regular reviews.

CONCLUSION

The ND Parties agree to set up a joint expert level steering group that will be charged with the drafting of the abovementioned documents.

The ND Ministerial Meeting invites all ND parties and actors to participate in the debate on a new ND. Russian participation in this debate is crucial in order to obtain an active Russian involvement in all ND meetings and activities.