

Northern Dimension Business Council (NDBC)

18.3.2013 Short overview on activities

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Northern Dimension Senior officials' meeting in Stockholm on November 12, 2009 welcomed creating the NDBC and approved its' concept.

The purpose of NDBC is to involve and integrate companies be a part of the Northern Dimension policy, so that these companies could achieve competitive advantage through their active participation in NDBC work. The fundamental idea of NDBC is that the competitiveness of any region in the world is based on trust between government and business; with a clear division of tasks, rights and responsibilities between business and government.

The goals of NDBC goals could be summarized in following:

1. NDBC is a platform for interaction, experience-sharing and networking between companies.
2. NDBC ensures that the view of business community will be taken into account in developing the Northern Dimension policy.
3. NDBC is a platform for the dialogue between business and government structures.

The NDBC co-chairmen have been since its establishment Mr. Tapio Kuula, President and General Director of Fortum Corporation and Mr. Alexey Mordashov, Director General of Severstal.

Based on ND policy priorities and partnerships on the one hand, and business communities initiatives on the other hand, NDBC has further established ten thematic working groups all of which have two co-chairmen, one from Russia and one from other ND Partner. In order to retain the flexibility and independence of the NDBC the Co-Chairmen have decided that for the time being no formal permanent Secretariat would be called for. The working group structure is flexible, i.e. NDBC may establish new working groups or modify existing groups, depending on the current needs coming from business community.

In the working group level the Ecology Working Group has together with NDEP established in the North-West Russia the Water Excellency Center. Medicine Working Group wants to improve the health care efficiency in all levels. In addition to guaranteeing proper and needed medicine the focus is maintaining availability, rational usage and affordable prices. Moreover, the Medicine WG has emphasized the role of good distribution practices, and utilizing technological solutions in fight against the counterfeits. Forestry WG has concluded that for improving the sector development in Russia there is a need for modernizing the normative-legal base of forest utilization. Increasing the forest road network is needed as well as guaranteeing affordable transportation of wood by rail. Besides creating stimuli for investors in the sector, the general awareness of wood as a building material, and as a high-tech modern material which enables huge opportunities for innovative design solutions. General awareness and popularity of wood has to be improved in the ND area, and especially in NW Russia.

NDBC has organized business forums in St. Petersburg on annual basis. The third annual Forum organized by NDBC in collaboration with AEB, Association of European Businesses took place in St. Petersburg on March 29, 2012. The event gathered altogether over 270 participants representing federal and regional authorities, NGOs, and business representatives, out of which most were SMEs from Russia and abroad.

High level representation from all ND partners is extremely important, as providing a platform for dialogue between decision-makers and business representatives is the fundamental idea of the NDBC work.

All companies regardless of the country of origin are welcome to join the NDBC activities at any point – the only criteria being the interest towards participating in efforts improving the investment climate in the ND area.

The next NDBC forum will be organized in St. Petersburg on 4.4.2013. For the program, please see <http://www.aebrus.ru/events/id/1414/>