

**Progress Report submitted to the Second Ministerial meeting of
the Renewed Northern Dimension Policy,
Oslo 2 November 2010**

Context

The Northern Dimension Political Declaration and the Northern Dimension Policy Framework Document, adopted at the Northern Dimension Summit on 24 November 2006 in Helsinki at the highest political level, provide the basis for the ND policy. According to the Policy Framework Document “*a permanent flow of information is a key element of the Northern Dimension policy. The Steering group will prepare an activity report before every Foreign Ministers’ meeting.*” The Steering Group submitted the first progress report to the first Ministerial meeting which took place in St. Petersburg on 28 October 2008. That report took account of the developments that had taken place between the entry into force of the two basic documents and the Ministerial meeting.

This report constitutes a second contribution from the Northern Dimension Steering Group to the Second Ministerial meeting in Oslo on 2 November 2010. It is a collaborative effort of the Steering Group and attempts to take account of the progress achieved since the first Ministerial meeting. As was the case with the previous progress report submitted to the first Ministerial meeting the intention is not to provide an overview of all the activities which have taken place in the region covered by the ND or activities taken place in the context of the ND policy but rather to highlight those which are of particular relevance to the policy and to its further development.

The Steering Group, in submitting this report to the attention of the Ministers, would wish to express its appreciation to all ND partnerships and initiatives which have provided assistance in the drafting of this report.

Second Senior Officials’ Meeting in Stockholm on 12 November 2009

The second meeting of the Senior Officials was convened in Stockholm on 12 November 2009, hosted by Sweden, holding the EU Presidency. The Chairman’s Conclusions of the meeting are attached to this Progress Report.

The meeting allowed for the opportunity to take stock of progress across the ND policy and to give instructions paving the way for further progress on the various initiatives. The SOM conclusions thus proved to be an efficient tool in the run-up to the Ministerial meeting and were instrumental in terms of guiding the work taking place within the various partnerships and initiatives.

Link with the Common Spaces

As set out in the Framework Document the ND is a regional expression of the four Common Spaces which will make it a cross-cutting topic and a tool where appropriate for the implementation of the Road Maps with participation of Iceland and Norway in matters relevant to the Northern Dimension.

The linkage between the ND Policy and the Common Spaces has continued to serve as a useful conceptual tool and has allowed both the European Union and the Russian Federation to provide regular updates on the implementation of the Road Maps for the benefit of Iceland and Norway.

Progress on Partnerships

The Framework Document noted that the partners favour the model of Partnerships as an effective way to organize practical implementation of projects in the agreed priority sectors. To date four Partnerships have been established: **Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP)**, **Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS)**, **Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL)** and the **Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC)**, NDPTL and NDPC having been established after the first Ministerial meeting.

Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP) ¹

The NDEP has remained an important flagship of the ND policy and has enhanced implementation of large infrastructure projects in the non-nuclear envelope using relatively small grants to leverage substantial funding from IFIs, Russian federal and regional sources as well as bilateral donors. Similarly, significant progress has been achieved under the “Nuclear

¹ For further information see www.ndep.org

window” to reduce threats from radioactive wastes and spent nuclear fuel. Based on the achieved successful and concrete results the Assembly of Contributors in 2009 agreed to extend the activities of the NDEP Support Fund by five years until 15 November 2017. The NDEP will celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2011.

A total of €284 million has been allocated to the NDEP Support Fund by 12 governments and the European Commission, including the Russian Federation and Belarus. Of this sum, €127 million was made available for environmental projects and €157 million was earmarked for nuclear safety projects.

In the non-nuclear window of the NDEP Support Fund the Assembly of Contributors has to date allocated € 100.2 million to 17 environmental projects which improve water and wastewater infrastructure, agricultural waste management and energy efficiency in North-West Russia, including in the Kaliningrad Oblast. The most outstanding achievements include significant improvement of wastewater treatment in St Petersburg and start of construction of the new wastewater treatment plant for the City of Kaliningrad. This has brought NDEP close to full commitment of the present funds for the non-nuclear window and a new replenishment round for voluntary contributions is being launched.

Regarding the nuclear window so far, the total grant allocations from the NDEP nuclear window amount to €95 million. Three projects out of eight have been completed and the implementation of the other approved projects is on-going with new structures for management and monitoring in place.

In spite of the overall progress in the implementation, some concerns have been raised by the very low level of disbursement within the Nuclear Window of the NDEP. This appeared to be due to a rather complex and lengthy preparation stage of several major projects. A considerable increase of the commitment and disbursement level in the Nuclear Window in 2011 is desirable.

In 2009, the NDEP welcomed Belarus **as a donor** to the Fund and eligible for grant support for environmental projects within the Baltic Sea Region with a grant ceiling of €5 million. A project pipeline is under development to rehabilitate a number of wastewater treatment facilities with significant cross-border benefits.

The Senior Officials meeting in St. Petersburg in 2007 recognized energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy as a promising direction of cooperation in the ND and instructed the Steering Group to further study the issue. The Steering Group has repeatedly addressed the issue, most recently in Oslo on 23 September 2010. The IFI partners of the NDEP have much experience in the field of energy efficiency and at the recent NDSG meeting in Oslo the EBRD presented an overview of different types of energy efficiency investments and their possible relevance for cooperation in the Russian Federation. The Steering Group has requested the EBRD to prepare a concept paper on the ways of further enhancing energy efficiency actions within the ND.

Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS)²

The NDPHS has continued to provide an effective mechanism for promoting the relevant strategies and principles in the region, including promotion of the implementation of international commitments on health. The Partnership has been instrumental in intensifying and complementing bilateral cooperation between the partner countries and organizations.

The decisions that have been taken and implemented during 2009 and 2010, namely adoption of the new strategy, reform of the NDPHS expert-level structures, assumption of the lead role for fostering cooperation in health in the Baltic Sea region, have marked a new chapter in the development of the NDPHS.

In November 2009, a new NDPHS Strategy was adopted by the Partnership Annual Conference (PAC) to guide the Partnership for the period until 2013. The strategy places emphasis on policy and strategy development, as well as on coordination and project facilitation. Importantly, the strategy identifies goals and corresponding mid-term operational targets and indicators which aim to make the Partnership more responsive to regional challenges and to make its work more focused on achieving specific, measurable and time-targeted objectives. As a result, in June 2010 the four NDPHS Expert Groups were transformed into four new Expert Groups and four new Task Groups, all of which will focus on the implementation of concrete actions.

With regard to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region the NDPHS undertook the role of Lead Partner for the coordination of the health sub-

² For further information see www.ndphs.org

area of Priority Area 12 of the EUSBSR Action Plan. In order to fulfil this role, the NDPHS has continued to endeavour bringing together relevant stakeholders, and to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the projects and to report on the progress achieved.

In this context the NDPHS has convened a seminar on project development and funding in October 2010, which brought together project proponents and representatives of donor agencies, who jointly discussed project concepts that are being developed by the NDPHS and the available funding possibilities.

The NDPHS has also continued its efforts in policy shaping. For example, in 2009 the PAC adopted the Declaration on Principles of Cooperation between Prison Health and Public Health Services and Development of a Safer Society. The Declaration emphasizes that prison health is part of public health and calls for closer links between prison health services and public health services.

The new NDPHS Strategy places focus on project development. The newly established Expert Groups and Task Groups are now developing project concepts, with an aim to start the implementation of those projects in 2011. Effort has been taken to involve several important regional actors to join NDPHS efforts in developing and implementing projects. Efforts continue to ensure the funding for the development and implementation of the projects.

Successfully launched projects include, but are not limited to the ImPrim project. Originally initiated by the NDPHS Expert Group on Primary Health Care, the ImPrim project was included in the EUSBSR Action Plan and is co-sponsored by the EU Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013. The project aims at promoting equitably distributed high quality Primary Health Care services in the Baltic Sea Region in order to increase the cost efficiency of the public health system and more efficiently counteract communicable diseases as well as health problems related to social factors.

The NDPHS has constantly aimed at improving and increasing its activities in collection and dissemination of information. The NDPHS website is an important gateway to information about public health and social well-being in Northern Europe and is appreciated both for its contents and user-friendliness. It also provides access to the NDPHS Database and Project Pipeline. The NDPHS Database provides information on projects,

organizations, experts and publications. In addition, NDPHS e-news and e-newsletters are issued on a regular basis.

Efforts to establish the legal capacity of the NDPHS Secretariat are ongoing. An ad hoc working group on the Secretariat's Legal Capacity held three meetings during 2010 so far, and, as a result, a draft Agreement on the Establishment of the Secretariat of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being was developed.

Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL)

Following the decision of the 2008 Ministerial meeting to establish the Northern Dimension Partnership for Transport and Logistics (NDPTL) a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the responsible Ministries of Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the European Commission in the margins of the TEN-T conference in Naples on 21 October 2009. According to the MoU the main objectives of the NDPTL are to:

- Improve the major transnational transport connections between the partner-countries with the view to stimulate sustainable economic growth at the local/regional and global levels;
- Accelerate the implementation of transport and logistics infrastructure projects along the major transnational connections, and facilitate the approval of projects of mutual interest;
- Accelerate the removal of non-infrastructure related bottlenecks, affecting the flow of transport in and across the region, and facilitate the improvement of logistics in international supply chains;
- Set up effective structures to monitor the implementation of the proposed projects and measures.

Following the conclusions of the second ND Senior Officials Meeting the NDPTL Steering Committee initiated work to reach agreement on a legally binding agreement on the organizational structure and budget of the NDPTL, with a view of concluding preparations by the time of the second ND Ministerial meeting in Oslo 2 November 2010. In this context, the Steering Committee of the NDPTL, established following the signature of the MoU, met for the first time on 8 December 2009 in Stockholm and three other

times in 2010: March (Vilnius) and April (Bruxelles) and September (Vilnius). In the framework of the "TEN-T days" that took place in Zaragoza (Spain) on 8-9 June 2010 under the auspices of Vice President Siim Kallas, the eleven countries belonging to the NDPTL endorsed the setting up of the secretariat of the partnership. Since that first tangible result, nine countries have signed the agreement for the setting up of the secretariat, while the remaining partners have adopted a Declaration of Intent waiting for the completion of their internal proceedings. In October the Agreement was signed by Poland and Finland. Russia will sign it on 2 November 2010 in Oslo during the ND Ministerial Meeting. Belarus is expected to sign by the end of the year.

On the basis of and following the results of the Steering Committee meeting in Vilnius on 28 September the Nordic Investment Bank has launched the recruitment process of the Secretariat staff. Funding for the Secretariat for 2011 will be covered by the already pledged voluntary contributions and from 2012 onwards the expenses will be covered by an agreed financial scheme of regular contributions. Inauguration of the NDPTL Secretariat should take place soon after the Second ND Ministerial meeting. Work will continue with regard to adopting the Road Map of activities for next years.

Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC)³

The Joint Statement of the first Northern Dimension Ministerial meeting emphasized the considerable potential for cultural cooperation in the area of the Northern Dimension and appreciated the contribution by the Nordic Council of Ministers in the ongoing discussion on perspectives of such cooperation in the ND framework, including the possibility to create a Partnership. Ministers instructed the ND Steering Group to set up an ad-hoc expert group to examine the issue and to assess the feasibility of such a Partnership.

An ad-hoc expert group was set up by the ND Steering Group at a meeting in Oslo on 5 March 2009 and under Swedish Chairmanship prepared a report which was submitted to the ND Steering Group in September 2009.

The ND Senior Officials decided to establish the ND Partnership on Culture and also instructed the ND Steering Group *“to convene a Preparatory Committee to finalize the organizational structure of the NDPC with the aim*

³ For further information see www.norden.org/ndpc

to make it fully operational by the time of the second ND Ministerial Meeting”.

An NDPC Preparatory Committee, under the Norwegian Chairmanship, started its work in March 2010 and prepared a Memorandum of Understanding which was signed by the responsible Ministries of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden and the European Commission on 20 May 2010 in Saint Petersburg.

The overall objective of the NDPC is to serve as a focal point for networks, projects and other cultural activities in the ND area. It aims to promote interaction between cultural actors and the business community and to facilitate assessment of the financial viability of projects and their access to sources of financing.

Following the signing of the MoU an NDPC Steering Committee was established and has been chaired by Norway. The NDPC Steering Committee has worked on an Action Plan for the years 2011-2013 and has continued work on establishing the further modalities needed for the Partnership to become fully operational with a functioning Secretariat.

The NDPC Steering Committee proposed to the Nordic Council of Ministers to host the NDPC Secretariat in its initial phase for the years 2011-13. The NCM who has hosted and financed the secretariat during the time of preparation decided in October 2010 that the NDPC Secretariat can be placed in the NCM Secretariat for a three year period (2011-2013) and that the NCM will support the NDPC Secretariat with 700 000 DKK for 2011, 400 000 DK for 2012 and 200 000 DKK for 2013. In October 2010, the NDPC adopted by silence procedure an Action Plan for 2011-2013. These decisions and the completion of the remaining preparatory work will pave the way for establishing a Secretariat under the auspices of the NCM in Copenhagen as from the beginning of 2011.

On 21-22 May 2010 an International Forum on the NDPC took place in Saint Petersburg at the invitation of the Saint Petersburg Government and the NCM. The event was a follow-up to a previous Forum on the NDPC arranged in Helsinki in 2009. The Regional Councils participating in the Partnership were represented at both Forums.

Other Northern Dimension initiatives

Northern Dimension Institute (NDI)⁴

The Second Senior Officials' meeting welcomed the establishment of the Northern Dimension Institute which brings together several research entities to pool together research and information dissemination efforts in the Northern Dimension area.

During the year 2010, the main aim of NDI has been to strengthen its coordination structure, to make the research work of NDI possible, to deepen collaboration between NDI parties and to firmly establish the position of NDI in ND structures. The NDI Steering Group was established in spring 2010, and it had its first meeting in May 2010 in Finland. Leaders for the Scientific Thematic Groups (NDI STGs) on Culture and Society, Energy and the Environment, as well as Transport and Logistics have been chosen. A leader for the NDI STG on Public Health and Social Well-being will be nominated during the autumn 2010.

NDI currently has 19 member institutes, consisting of universities and research institutes from the ND region and beyond. The NDI Coordinator will continue her efforts in negotiating with potential additional partners to enlarge the network further. The first project plans will be written, and possible funding sources for the research projects will be identified during the autumn of 2010. Leader of the NDI STG on Energy and the Environment, Dr Urban Wråkberg, from the Barents Institute, Norway, has already made a draft version of an Expression of Interest to the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) proposing that NDI STG on Energy and the Environment could participate in NCM Knowledge Building and Networking Programme with North-West Russia. NDI STG on Transport and Logistics is preparing a funding application for an infrastructure-related project to be sent to the Central Baltic Interreg IV A Programme 2007-2013.

Northern Dimension Business Council (NDBC)

The Senior Officials welcomed the initiative to create the ND Business Council and encouraged the initiators to continue preparations on its establishment and to start its activities once the preparatory work has been completed. The Second Ministerial meeting will be able to welcome the

⁴ For further information see www.ndinstitute.org

official establishment of the NDBC and to note the first results of its deliberations.

The key tasks identified by the participating businesses include:

1) providing a platform for companies operating in the ND area to network, 2) enhancing communication and interaction between the business communities and ND actors and 3) providing a platform for companies to meet with the authorities. Consequently the NDBC aims at enhancing communication and interaction of the business communities with the ND actors. The NDBC seeks to increase contacts between the business community and local and regional authorities in the ND region, especially in North-West Russia.

While being autonomous in defining branches and frames of activities and concrete business actions in the ND area, the NDBC co-chairmanship regularly submits to the ND governing bodies reports on the recent NDBC activities and progress made.

Based on ND policy priorities and partnerships on the one hand, and business communities initiatives on the other hand, NDBC has further established nine sectoral working groups all of which have two co-chairmen, one from Russia 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 NDBC concept was also presented by the NDBC co-chairman, CEO Tapio Kuula, at the Baltic Development Forum Summit in Vilnius, organised back-to-back with the Baltic Sea States Summit and, respectively, by NDBC co-chairman Alexey Mordashev at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. These events have been the main fora where NDBC activities have been presented to business communities in the ND region. The two co-chairmen have also been representing the NDBC in other business events, mainly in North-West Russia.

The working groups on forestry and environment/clean technology have been in the forefront of creating working methods for NDBC working groups. The forestry working group has been formulating a joint statement, which aims at establishing recommendations for investment environment improvement. Several other issues have been on the agenda, among them fostering collaboration with the academic world, especially regarding continuous education. The clean technology working group has been

formulating a draft education program for the North-West Russian Water Excellence Center.

An executive board meeting with the NDBC co-chairmen Mr. Kuula and Mr. Mordashev and NDBC working group co-chairmen was organised in St. Petersburg on 23 September 2010, in connection with the First European Russian Business Forum, organized by the Association of European Businesses (AEB). Several NDBC co-chairmen were also among the Business Forum speakers.

The NDBC is studying possible areas of cooperation with the ND Institute, for instance in education in forestry and clean technology. The NDBC is planning to organize a forum in March, 2011.

Sub-regional and sub-state cooperation has been an issue which has been discussed in the ND Steering Group meetings on several occasions on the basis of the initiative first presented by the Baltic Sea States Sub-Regional Cooperation (BSSSC). The Senior Officials confirmed the desirability of an active involvement in the ND policy of the organisations representing the sub-regional level in the ND area and welcomed the meeting, convened by the EU Committee of the Region (CoR), in Helsingborg on 26-27 November 2009 as an opportunity to advance the discussions 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 bodies.

The participants of the seminar emphasised their wish to be actively engaged in the shaping of the Northern Dimension Policy, in particular in developing cooperation with local and regional authorities of the Northern Dimension partners.

Cross-border and interregional cooperation among social, economic and institutional stakeholders from various regions can be perceived as one of the reasons of the success of the renewed Northern Dimension Policy. In order to reinforce the sub-regional and sub-state dimension of Northern Dimension the EU's Committee of the Region has proposed that the revised EGTC Regulation⁵ should allow for cooperation with third countries. This would develop a set of tools for regional projects that will be part of a general strategy. Once the tools and their use will be agreed at the central

⁵ Regulation No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation.

level, projects could then be implemented without extra permissions needed, if the local authorities would be interested.⁶

The ENPI CBC programmes, where also Norway participates, open for an extensive and broad cross-border cooperation in the ND area.

The Senior Officials instructed the Steering Group to consider ways of developing further the Northern Dimension **Arctic Window** without duplicating the work of the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and by giving particular consideration on how the indigenous peoples could be included in the deliberations on the ND Arctic Window.

At the 11th Meeting of the Steering Group in Reykjavik on 21 June 2010 all Northern Dimension Partnerships and initiatives were invited to consider to what extent increased attention could be given to the Arctic issues in their respective domains. Preliminary results of these contributions were discussed in Oslo on 23 September and the Steering Group decided to request that all ND Partnerships and initiatives submit written contributions on their views on how they could pay increased attention to the Arctic region. Norway undertook to prepare a concept paper on the ways and means of better involving the Indigenous Peoples in the practical implementation of the Northern Dimension policy.

In the European Union the adoption of the **EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region** in October 2009 marked an important step in terms of focusing increased attention to the variety of challenges faced by the region. While the EUBSR is an internal Strategy of the European Union it is clear that many of the challenges call for constructive cooperation with other Northern Dimension Partners. Because of this the European Commission kept Partners regularly informed of the process and invited the Partners to the series of stakeholder events convened in the region. The Strategy and its Action Plan in particular highlighted the role of the Northern Dimension policy and its structures as an important framework for discussing constructive cooperation between the EU and the other ND Partners. The ND Senior Officials in turn instructed the Steering Group to explore possible areas of mutual interest and to explore how cooperation in such areas could be taken forward. A first exchange of concrete ideas has taken place, and

⁶ As part of the revision of the regulation, on 3 May 2010 the CoR, together with the presidential trio of the Council of the European Union (Spain-Belgium-Hungary), the European Commission and the Interact programme, launched a broad consultation. The results of this consultation will contribute to the own-initiative opinion on the revision of the EGTS regulation, which the CoR will present in early 2011.

further discussions on possible cooperation are under way, notably between the European Commission and Russian authorities.⁷

Both Canada and the United States have remained committed observers to the ND policy, and the ND Policy is open to accepting new observers. Belarus has applied for observer status. Belarus participates already in the activities of the NDEP and the NDPTL as well as in the network of universities created by the ND Institute. The Steering Group could be advised to consider to what extent efforts would be called for to further enhance the engagement of the observers in the Northern Dimension policy.

The co-financing remained a corner-stone principle of the ND policy. The International Financial Institutions have continued their important roles as major lenders in the region. During the reporting period also the European Commission decided to offer financial assistance for the various ND Partnerships and initiatives. 15 million Euros have been made available from the European Neighbourhood and Partnership instruments and a large share of the 20 million budgetary reserve of the European Parliament for the benefit of the external aspects of the EUBSR will be allocated to various ND actions.

Conclusions

The Northern Dimension as a common policy between all its partners has served as a successful tool for regional cooperation. As highlighted above much progress has been achieved and numerous new potential areas for further cooperation have been identified during the reporting period.

In addition to offering a framework for regional level cooperation between the European Union and the Russian Federation the Northern Dimension has also offered a possibility to draw on the EU's special relationship with Iceland and Norway to provide an efficient multilateral framework for cooperation.

Since the Northern Dimension is first and foremost about practical cooperation and concrete projects it is clear that financial contributions from

⁷ With regard to other European Union actors the **European Economic and Social Committee** has continued to address the ND Policy in its cooperation with the Civic Chamber of the Federation of Russia and in its activities within the European Economic Area Consultative Committee (EEA-CC). The EESC has in its opinion about the EU's Baltic Sea Strategy drawn attention to the role of the ND Policy for a successful implementation of the strategy. This aspect was as well addressed in a conference about the BS Strategy arranged by the EESC in Helsinki.

a wide array of donors would be needed. The principle of co-financing which is the basis for funding within the ND Policy has continued to work well. Financial support by all ND Partners to the various ND initiatives as well as continued involvement of IFI's will remain an important prerequisite for their continued success.

The four Regional Councils, as Participants to the ND, will remain important and close cooperation partners for all the ND Partnership and initiatives. Further cooperation, better synergies and streamlining of respective actions will stand to benefit all stakeholders. Expansion of ND activities would not need to imply reprioritizing the work of the Regional Councils but it would be important to ensure that efforts in both contexts are sufficiently aligned and coordinated in order to avoid unnecessary overlap. From 2011 onwards the European Commission will invite all four Councils for annual briefing sessions on EU policies which can further foster the establishment of necessary contacts. To this end it is necessary to go on with holding constant and intensive dialogue between the ND and the Regional Councils in the North of Europe (the process launched at the earmarked meeting in Saint-Petersburg on September 30, 2009).

The renewed Northern Dimension Policy has succeeded in establishing cooperation across a wide selection of different sectors. The Steering Group will have to retain its important role in ensuring that coordination between these initiatives is effective and that all activities efficiently contribute to the overall policy objectives of the Northern Dimension policy. The Steering Group would call upon all actors in the region, and beyond, to participate actively in the various activities that have been established and stands ready to consider development of possible new initiatives emanating from the participating governments, financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, Regional Councils and other stakeholders of the ND policy.

Annexes:

1. Meetings of the Steering Group and the Senior Officials
2. Conclusions of the Senior Officials meeting 12 November 2009 in Stockholm

Annex 1

First meeting of the Steering Group, Moscow 13 March 2007

Second meeting of the Steering Group, Brussels 19 June 2007
Third meeting of the Steering Group, Reykjavik 11 October 2007
First meeting of the Senior Officials on 21 November 2007 in St. Petersburg.
Fourth meeting of the Steering Group, Oslo 28 February 2008
Fifth meeting of the Steering Group, Moscow, 26 May 2008
Sixth meeting of the Steering Group, Brussels 23 September 2008
First Ministerial meeting, St. Petersburg 28 October 2008
Seventh meeting of the Steering Group, Oslo 5 March 2009
Eight meeting of the Steering Group, Reykjavik, 18 June 2009
Ninth meeting of the Steering Group, Moscow 28 September 2009
Second Senior Officials meeting, Stockholm 12 November 2009
Tenth meeting of the Steering Group, Brussels 30 March 2010
Eleventh meeting of the Steering Group, Reykjavik 21 June 2010
Twelfth meeting of the Steering Group, Oslo 23 September 2010

Annex 2

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.
