

**THE THIRD SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING OF
THE RENEWED NORTHERN DIMENSION**
(Reykjavík, November 8, 2011)

CHAIRMAN'S CONCLUSIONS

The third meeting of the Senior Officials of the renewed Northern Dimension took place in Reykjavík on the 8th of November 2011. The meeting was hosted by Iceland.

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

The participants reviewed the implementation of the Joint Statement of the second Ministerial meeting of the renewed Northern Dimension (Oslo, 2nd November, 2010) and noted the progress that has since been made on the issues highlighted in the statement and other developments in the ND area that have since taken place.

The Senior Officials took note of the information presented on the recent development of the **Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP)** by the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB), as the Chair of the NDEP Steering Group, and by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) as the manager of the NDEP Support Fund. The Senior Officials stressed the importance of the 10th anniversary of the NDEP as a milestone in regional cooperation and welcomed the replenishments to the Support Fund announced in the Anniversary Meeting in St Petersburg on June 16, 2011. They underlined the central role of the NDEP in environmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea region as well as other ND regions. The current mandate of the NDEP, extended until 2017, provides the Partnership with a solid ground to fulfil its tasks.

Senior Officials recalled the importance of further cooperation in the field of energy efficiency as agreed by Ministers in Oslo. They took note of the current project development of the NDEP related to energy efficiency and called for a broader and more systematic approach of the Partnership to these issues as a complement to the other environmental efforts that the NDEP is making.

The participants of the meeting took note of the information presented by the Russian Chairmanship of the **Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-Being (NDPHS)** regarding NDPHS activities which cover a broad range of issues such as non-communicable diseases, healthy lifestyles, primary health care, occupational safety and health, as well as communicable diseases with a focus on HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. They looked forward to the upcoming signature of the Agreement granting a legal capacity to the NDPHS Secretariat at the Partnership's Annual Conference to be held in St Petersburg on November 24 – 25, 2011. The meeting took positive note of the recent financial support to the project activities of the Partnership and reiterated the Partnership's significant role in enhancing expert level cooperation to tackle social and health problems and to foster healthy lifestyles. The Senior Officials thanked the Russian Chairmanship for the valuable work during its two-year chairmanship, to be succeeded by Finland for the next period 2012-2013.

The Senior Officials noted the information presented by the Norwegian Steering Committee Chairmanship of the **Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL)**, emphasising the NDPTL as a main forum to discuss regional transport and logistics issues within the ND. The Partnership can play an essential role in coordinating relevant national transport policies and carrying out projects that help to identify and remove bottlenecks, and to facilitate transport flows. The participants of the meeting highlighted the NDPTL as a cooperation structure that combines the specific transportation needs of the Northern Dimension area with the new opportunities of trade, acknowledging the need to develop the transport sector in an environmentally sustainable manner. The Senior Officials encouraged the NDPTL to vigorously pursue efforts towards the development of an integrated transport system in the ND and the creation of a solid financial base for pursuing its objectives. In this context, they took note of the ongoing work on the idea of the possible development of an NDPTL support fund.

The participants took note of the information presented by the representative of the **Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC)** as it moves through the early stages of development, with the MOU signed in 2010 and the action plan in place following its presentation to the second Northern Dimension Ministerial in Oslo in November the same year. The first, EU funded projects of the NDPC, including the “Viking Routes Project”, focusing on cultural tourism and the music industry, are to be presented in early 2012. It was noted that the NDPC may serve as a forum to create synergies, especially in the field of the creative industries or other emerging branches of cultural activity. Considering the various cultural activities of other organisations, such as the CBSS (Ars Baltica), discussions should be held to help ensure coherence in the cultural activities of the various fora in the Baltic Sea Region. At the same time, the meeting emphasised the necessity to guarantee a solid funding for the Partnerships activities.

The participants welcomed the work of the **Northern Dimension Institute (NDI)** and noted the information presented as its activities. As an active and growing network of universities and research institutes the NDI brings great value into ND cooperation by publishing independent research and studies with relevance to ND activities.

The Senior Officials took note of the NDI study “Coherent Northern Dimension”, mapping and analysing potential synergies of the Northern Dimension and the four regional councils in the North, and welcomed the announced conferences to be held to deepen the discussion on the priorities and objectives of the regional cooperation.

Underlining the need to increase the visibility of ND cooperation, the meeting welcomed the NDI’s initiative to create a Northern Dimension web page to serve as a focal point for ND Partnerships and other ND actors. The NDI’s suggestion to launch a contest to create a logo for the ND was welcomed by the meeting. The NDI was invited to report on the results of the contest to the Third Northern Dimension Ministerial meeting in the second half of 2012.

The Senior Officials recognised the important activities of the four Regional Councils and encouraged them to play an active role within all ND partnerships in order to secure coordination, exploit synergies and avoid overlap, in line with their status as Participants in the ND. The Regional Councils’ mandates to approach regional issues within their defined geographic areas should be fully respected in light of the wider approach of the ND.

partnerships with the overall aim of achieving common and joint results. A closer interaction between all cooperation formats is needed with overall aim of achieving better results at minimum costs.

The Senior Officials took note of the information presented by the representatives of the **Northern Dimension Business Council (NDBC)**, in particular the successful involvement of business actors in the ND Forum in St Petersburg in March, 2011, and at the International Economic Forum there in June, 2011.

The participants noted the work done ahead of the upcoming NDBC Forum in March 2012 in St. Petersburg as part of the ongoing development of the ND business cooperation on tangible economic issues. The Senior Officials invited the NDBC to enhance the cooperation with ND Partnerships and other ND actors, stressing the importance of creating networks combining the strengths of the Business Council, ND Partnerships and the ND Institute.

The Senior Officials reiterated the useful role that the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region can play in the practical implementation of the Northern Dimension policy.

The Senior Officials took note of the readiness of the EU to convene the next **Northern Dimension Ministerial Meeting** in 2012.