

Europaministerens indlæg på BDF Forum i Riga den 29. maj 2013

Dear hosts, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to start by thanking professor Henningsen for his excellent presentation of the “Political State of the Region Report”.

An important process was set in motion with the establishment of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) in 1992 at the initiative of former foreign ministers Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Uffe Ellemann-Jensen.

Since then, a wide range of regional cooperation fora have been added to the picture.

As I state in the foreword to the state of the region report, I see firm signs of a common will to intensify and deepen cooperation in our region to new levels. I welcome this development and hope that we will continue down this road.

In particular, I hope for more synergies among the main cooperation fora, such as the CBSS, the EUSBSR and the Northern Dimension. And I hope for increased involvement of Russia in the regional context. Both of these aspects deserve additional attention.

How can we, the Governments, move forward on these issues? What means should we use to promote this agenda?

I would like to mention three.

First, *stronger cooperation*. Our cooperation is strong and dynamic. But it can be expanded further. In particular, I hope for increased involvement of Russia in the regional context. It is important that cooperation involves all Baltic Sea states. Not only from a political point of view. Also with a view to increase effectiveness in our cooperation. This is important.

Second, *closer coordination*. We already coordinate our efforts to some extent. But more could be done. With the three main cooperation for a in mind – CBSS, EUSBSR and Northern Dimension – it strikes me that we could all benefit from ensuring better coordination among the major cooperation fora. The first steps have already been taken to hold regular meetings among these three platforms: to exchange information, to coordinate activities and to avoid overlap. Nevertheless, I believe such coordination efforts should be developed further. Increased coordination is

key to create synergies in our cooperation and to avoid overlap. This is important.

Third, *better communication* is of the essence in this day and age. If you want to spread information effectively. If you want to get your message across to the public at large. And if you want to engage the public in your endeavors.

Sometimes it seems that the activities in the Baltic Sea region are not too well known in the broad public. It could be worthwhile looking into this matter to see if we could improve communication in order to promote a common feeling of belonging to one and the same region. This is important.

Improvements in these three areas are necessary if we are to exploit the full potential of the Baltic Sea Region.

In a few days, I will present the Danish Government's new policy frame for Baltic Sea cooperation. We aim to raise our political profile in the Baltic Sea context. But also to increase our effectiveness in, our focus on and the impact of our engagement in Baltic Sea cooperation.

The policy framework is based on three building blocks, which is why we call it the 1 - 2- 3 policy. It has one main goal: to tie the Baltic Sea Region together in an ever stronger cooperation between all Baltic Sea States, including Russia.

It has two priorities: to protect the environment and climate as well as to create growth in a broad sense. Protecting the environment and the climate reflect the Government's Green Growth agenda. And Denmark is well equipped to engage in precisely these two fields.

We intend to focus our endeavors on three main fora for cooperation: The Council of Baltic Sea States, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the Northern Dimension. Our new policy framework comes with a wide range of specific implementing measures. Our new policy framework will contribute to improve our abilities in the areas I have mentioned: cooperation, coordination and communication.

Thank you!