

**THE SECOND MINISTERIAL MEETING
OF THE RENEWED NORTHERN DIMENSION
(Oslo, 2 November, 2010)
JOINT STATEMENT**

The second Ministerial meeting of the renewed Northern Dimension was convened in Oslo on the 2nd of November 2010, and chaired by H.E. Jonas Gahr Støre, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway.

The meeting was attended by the four Northern Dimension Partners (European Union, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation) at Foreign Minister or equivalent level. The Northern Dimension participants – the Regional Councils, the International Financial Institutions - as well as other actors, initiatives and bodies of the Northern Dimension Partners took an active part in the meeting. Representatives of the USA and Canada attended the meeting as observers.

The Meeting provided an opportunity for the Ministers, building on the Conclusions of The Second Senior Officials Meeting held in Stockholm on 12 November, 2009, to review the progress achieved with regard to the various Northern Dimension Partnerships and initiatives, and to provide further guidance on future work.

The Ministers took note of the second Progress Report, covering the period from the first Ministerial meeting in 2008, submitted by the Northern Dimension Steering Group. The Ministers expressed their appreciation of the progress of the ND policy made in the course of the two years following the first Ministerial meeting, in developing the Northern Dimension policy into a well functioning and widening framework for constructive and result-oriented regional cooperation spanning over a broad range of different policy sectors.

Based on the conclusions of the Progress Report and following the presentations by participants of the meeting the Ministers in particular:

- took note of the reports by the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO) as the Chair of the Steering Group of the **Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP)** and by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) as the manager of the NDEP Support Fund on the progress achieved. The Ministers welcomed the extension of the NDEP mandate to 2017 as a clear confirmation of the indisputable continued relevance of the NDEP in addressing major environmental challenges in the Northern Dimension area, primarily in the Baltic Sea Region, but also in other geographical parts of the Northern Dimension. The Ministers noted that following the successful launching of projects the NDEP Support Fund was in need of further replenishment. The Ministers welcomed the contribution of the European Commission of 14 million Euros and invited all interested Governments and other contributors and donors to contribute to the Fund.

- agreed that further cooperation in the field of **energy efficiency and use of renewable energy** would be essential for the sustainable development of the Northern Dimension area, while also being a substantive element in the modernisation of our economies. In this context the Ministers expressed their appreciation for the increased attention given by the NDEP to measures and projects improving the efficiency in the use of energy as a complement to the other environmental efforts that the NDEP is undertaking. They invited the NDEP Steering Group and the Support Fund Management to develop further measures to promote energy efficiency and use of renewable energy.

- took note of the report by the Russian Chair of the **Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS)** and welcomed the new momentum created by the successful reform of the NDPHS structures and the adoption and implementation of its Strategy. They commended the Partnership's focus on achieving specific, measurable and time-targeted objectives reflecting regional priorities. To that end, they underlined the importance of continued efforts to deliver concrete results based on the principle of co-financing from the Northern Dimension Partners. The Ministers expressed appreciation for the joint efforts to reach a solution on the pending issue of the legal status of the Secretariat and urged all participating Governments to solve this issue as a matter of urgency. They also expressed appreciation of the support which the Council of the Baltic Sea States provided to the Partnership Secretariat. The Ministers welcomed the efforts of the Russian Chair in raising the visibility of the NDPHS. The Ministers welcomed the recent decision of the Norwegian Government to allocate nine million Norwegian crowns to the NDPHS Project Pipeline and invited other donors to follow suit.

- took note of the status report provided by the Lithuanian Chair of the Steering Committee of the **Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL)**. The Ministers welcomed the successful conclusion of the legally binding agreement to establish the Secretariat under the auspices of the Nordic Investment Bank headquarters in Helsinki and looked forward to the completion of the Secretariat staff recruitment procedure and launching of the NDPTL practical activities by the end of 2010. They also expressed appreciation for the work done so far by the NDPTL Steering Committee in compiling concrete project proposals and in drawing up a road map to be approved by a High Level Meeting by the end of 2010.

- took note of the status report provided by Norway as the Chair of the Steering Committee of the **Partnership on Culture (NDPC)** and welcomed the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding by the responsible Ministries of all the participating countries as well as the European Commission in May of 2010. They also welcomed the adoption of an Action Plan for the period 2011-2013. The Ministers expressed their appreciation for the decision of the Nordic Council of Ministers regarding the hosting of the Secretariat and for providing financial support for the NDPC for the next three years.

The Ministers underlined the potential that the NDPC holds for initiating new project ideas in the cultural sphere and in terms of building stronger synergies between the existing cultural operators in the Northern Dimension area.

- expressed their continuous support for the **Northern Dimension Institute (NDI)**, which has managed to bring together an impressive number of universities and research institutes in the region and beyond. The Ministers underlined the potential that the Institute has in closely cooperating with the Northern Dimension partnerships and other Northern Dimension initiatives, and acknowledged the key role it could play with regard to seeking further synergies between the Northern Dimension and other actors in the region. The Ministers acknowledged the importance of the NDI as being able to become an effective tool of high-quality academic and scientific expertise for the Northern Dimension structures. They stressed the necessity of making the Northern Dimension Institute more visible among academic communities as well as among potential beneficiaries and interest groups. The Ministers encouraged other universities to take advantage from the framework established by the NDI.

- welcomed the establishment of a **Northern Dimension Business Council (NDBC)**, as an initiative driven forward by the business communities themselves. The Ministers took a positive view on the launching of concrete activities through the NDBC working groups and looked forward to regular information on the activities of the Business Council. They also underlined that while the sustainability of the NDBC is for the enterprises themselves to determine, it would be of importance that all interested businesses of the Northern Dimension partners, irrespective of their size or country of origin be offered the possibility to join the practical work pursued within the NDBC structures. In addition the Ministers encouraged small and medium sized enterprises to take advantage of this possibility.

- underlined the need for close cooperation between the Northern Dimension structures and the **four Regional Councils in the North**: the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) and the Arctic Council (AC); and noted that closer cooperation can stand to bring concrete benefits by combining efforts and streamlining respective activities without duplication. The Ministers asked the Steering Group to submit recommendations for determined steps elaborated together with the Regional Councils in enhancing this cooperation for the next meeting of the Northern Dimension Senior Officials.

- underlined the importance of the sub-regional and sub-state cooperation in the Northern Dimension Area, and took note of the results of the seminar on "**Northern Dimension Sub-state cooperation**" which was convened in Helsingborg on 26 November 2009. The Ministers welcomed this initiative and invited regional and local actors of the Northern Dimension Partners to pursue practical preparations for enhanced

sub regional/sub state cooperation with a view to submitting a concrete proposal for the next meeting of the Senior Officials.

- reiterated that **co-financing** remains the cornerstone of the successful Northern Dimension financial arrangements and welcomed the recent decisions of the European Union to allocate project funding for the Northern Dimension Partnerships. The Ministers called on the participating Governments to support Northern Dimension activities and underlined the essential role that the International Financial Institutions have. The Ministers welcomed the launching of the ENPI Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes and urged the Joint Management Authorities to take due account of the Northern Dimension initiatives in their work in order to align the objectives of various efforts underway.

- took note of the **EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region** and its Action plan. They underlined the possible useful role the EUSBSR can play in the practical implementation of the Northern Dimension Policy, and welcomed constructive proposals for cooperation in the Baltic Sea region between the European Union, and Russia, with Iceland and Norway participating as appropriate in the implementation of concrete projects of mutual interest. The Ministers emphasized the useful role that the Northern Dimension Policy and its structures in diverse sectors can play in coordinating and forging forward this cooperation for the benefit of the whole region. The Ministers commended the successful leadership of the NDPHS in the health area of the EUSBSR Action Plan.

- noted the untapped potential of the **Northern Dimension Arctic Window** in offering additional opportunities for the Partners to pursue constructive cooperation regarding the European Arctic and Sub-Arctic areas. The Ministers instructed the Steering Group, in consultation with the Partnerships and initiatives, to consider further ways of addressing relevant issues in close cooperation with the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in order to achieve synergies and without duplicating work within the mandates of these organizations. They invited indigenous peoples' organizations to join this process.

The Ministers underlined the positive role that the Northern Dimension Policy can play in the implementation of the **EU-Russia Partnership for Modernisation** and confirmed the comprehensive approach to modernisation as expressed in the Joint Statement of the EU-Russia Summit held in Rostov-on-Don on 1 June 2010.

The Ministers took note of the state of play with regard to the application of **Belarus** to obtain observer status in the Northern Dimension Policy as welcomed by the Northern Dimension Senior Officials at their meeting on 12 November 2009 in Stockholm. The Ministers expressed the hope that necessary decision making procedures would be concluded shortly.

The Ministers underlined the valuable input that the national parliaments can bring in the functioning of the policy and in this context welcomed the invitation of the Norwegian Parliament to host the **Second Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum** in February 2011 in Tromsø.

The meeting took note of the Icelandic proposal to host the next Senior Officials meeting in Reykjavik in the autumn of 2011.