

THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY AND THE NORDIC COUNCIL

JOINT PRESS STATEMENT

On 15 December 2006 in Vilnius the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council convened for an annual summit to discuss their co-operation development and experience, the priorities of the Baltic – Nordic parliamentary co-operation, as well as the issues relating to energy in the Baltic Sea region, which is utmost important not only for the Baltic and Nordic countries, but for all the states of Europe.

Co-operation between the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council

- The Baltic Assembly (BA) – Nordic Council (NC) Annual Summit reaffirmed the continued need for common activities of the Baltic Sea Region. Baltic and Nordic parliamentarians noted that all co-operating countries would benefit from a deepened and intensified cooperation between the Baltic and Nordic countries.
- The overall objective of BA – NC cooperation is to promote democratic, socio-economic and cultural development of the Baltic Sea Region and to act as a vocal advocate of the specific challenges and possibilities of the states of this Region. The general drive should be towards flexible, targeted and efficient modes of cooperation.
- The BA and NC plan not only to continue their co-operation in future, but also to promote cooperation between the parliaments of the Nordic and the Baltic countries.

Energy in the Baltic Sea region

- Baltic and Nordic countries shall make the utmost of the possibility to act together both in the region and on the international arena when resolving immediate implementation of joint energy and infrastructure projects.
- The aim of Baltic – Nordic co-operation on energy is to promote effective, competitive, safe and sustainable energy production and supply. Energy resources are to be used in an economical and environmentally responsible way.
- Implementation of joint energy projects advances the integration of the regional energy markets in the Baltic – Nordic region into the common EU

market. The project of the power cable *Estlink*, which unites the Baltic States with Finland, is a significant step for ensuring developing energy market in the Baltic Sea Region, and the European Union is approaching to its goal to establish a common European power system and extend secure power supply possibilities.

- In regard to the Russian-German gas pipeline which is planned to run under the Baltic Sea, the Baltic and Nordic parliamentarians stress that construction of gas pipeline must not damage the ecosystems of the Baltic Sea and cause irrecoverable environmental problems to separate states of the Region.

Vilnius, 15 December 2006