

## **THE STAVANGER DECLARATION ON BALTIC SEA STATES SUBREGIONAL CO-OPERATION**

At the invitation of the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Mr. Johan Jørgen Holst, and the Chairman of the County Council of Rogaland, Mr. Odd Kvaløy, representatives from the Baltic Sea States (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russian, and Sweden) as well as representatives of the European Commission, met at Stavanger 7-8 October 1993 to discuss the possibilities for expanded subregional co-operation.

Taking into account the principles laid down in the declaration of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Baltic Sea States in Copenhagen 5-6 March 1992, and the encouragement given by the Council of the Baltic Sea States to develop subregional co-operation, the participants declared their readiness to expand subregional co-operation with the aim of supporting democracy and sustainable economic development.

The participants emphasised the importance of people-to-people contacts on all levels as a tool for promoting co-operation in the region. The Meeting underlined the importance of women representation in future work.

The participants agreed on the objective of expanded co-operation as a means to pave the way for new contacts and co-operation between authorities, institutions and industry at subregional level and to expand existing bilateral and multilateral subregional co-operation. They agreed that such co-operation could promote stability throughout the region as a whole.

In conformity with the Declaration on the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the participants agreed that the following areas are particularly well suited for expanded co-operation at the subregional level:

- Assistance to new local and regional administrative and democratic institutions
- Economic and technological exchange and assistance, including trade and investments
- Humanitarian and health issues
- Environmental protection and energy
- Culture, education and research
- Sports, tourism and information
- Transport and communication.

The Meeting underlined the need of having representation of the subregions in the Committee of Senior Officials of the Council of the Baltic Sea States as a link to the Council.

The participants expressed interest in the development of a European Community programme for subregional co-operation in the Baltic Sea States.

To follow up the ideas discussed and the interests expressed in Stavanger, the participants agreed to establish a working group on subregional co-operation, headed by Minister Gerd Walter of Schleswig-Holstein and consisting of two representatives from each participating country.

The working group will particularly consider a system for the exchange of information among the participating subregions.

The working group will prepare a follow-up meeting on Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation.

It was agreed that the follow-up meeting will take place in Northern Germany in 1994.