



Declaration

19th CBSS Ministerial Session, Kristiansand, Norway

25 May 2022

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) – consisting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Sweden, and the EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy – met for its 19th Session in Kristiansand at the invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway. This was the first regular meeting of the Council since 2013.

1. The Council noted that Russia on 17 May 2022 had decided to withdraw as a member of the CBSS, and recalled that Russia already on 3 March had been suspended from participation in CBSS work and activities together with observer state Belarus. Russia has violated the very foundation of cooperation by its unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against democratic and sovereign Ukraine. Belarus has been involved in this unjustified military aggression in an enabling role. The Russian aggression is entirely incompatible with the cooperative model of international relations in the Baltic Sea Region, has a long-term negative impact on regional security, and is contrary to the rules-based international order. The Council's relations with Russia and Belarus will remain severed until cooperation under the fundamental principles of international law has become possible again.
2. We stand with Ukraine, an observer state to the CBSS. We deplore and recognise the enormous suffering and sacrifice by the people of Ukraine in the courageous defence of their sovereignty and freedom and the common values that Europe stands for, such as democracy, human rights and peace. Our support to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity is unwavering. We continue to support democratic Ukraine's legitimate struggle and are ready to engage in a strong partnership of cooperation and reconstruction.
3. There cannot be impunity for war crimes. Russia and its accomplice Belarus bear full responsibility for the war of aggression. We support all efforts to ensure full accountability such as the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine by the United Nations Human Rights Council, the work of the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and the investigation opened by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court into the situation in Ukraine.
4. This year the Council marks its 30th anniversary. At the foundation in 1992 the CBSS reflected the aspirations of a new beginning, where confrontation and division of the past was replaced by partnership and cooperation following the demise of the Soviet Union. EU and European Economic Area integration, cooperation and cohesion have been the main driving force for the Region's rapid development. The CBSS has been

a bridge between EU and non-EU members and has pursued strong policies and projects for the benefit of the entire Region. The CBSS has adapted to developments and changing circumstances affecting the Region and will continue to do so in the future.

5. We reaffirm the validity of the Vilnius II Declaration adopted on 1 June 2021, - a shared Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2030. We emphasise the values which have made our countries globally attractive, with open societies where citizens enjoy freedom, prosperity and the rule of law. We highlight the role of young people and civil society and their participation in decision-making processes. Strong cooperation against organised crime and trafficking in human beings, for the protection of vulnerable women and children, and in the field of civil protection has become ever more important in the present situation.
6. Climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest is our collective goal. We will scale up actions to ensure a green transition of the global economy, including accelerating green energy development, and decarbonising the heavy industry, transport and construction sectors. We strive to reduce emissions from agriculture and ensure a healthy marine environment in the Baltic Sea and our other ocean areas. We will enhance collaboration on the circular economy and renewable energies, diversify our energy supplies and rapidly reduce our dependency on fossil fuels. We will increase cooperation to phase out our use of Russian gas, oil and coal as soon as possible. The European Green Deal and RePowerEU will ensure speed and direction. We will continue the close cooperation on these and other priority issues in the European Economic Area.
7. The CBSS is a platform for both political dialogue and practical cooperation. We emphasise close interaction with the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and other cooperation formats and programmes in the Region which reinforce and strengthen our common agenda. The Baltic Sea Region has a strong and well-functioning multi-level governance structure. Promoting a coherent system of cooperation networks leading to better synergies will remain important.
8. The Council thanked Norway for its 2021-2022 CBSS Presidency and recognised the Permanent International Secretariat in Stockholm for its effective contribution to CBSS work and activities. The Council welcomed Germany as incoming Presidency from July 2022.