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The Second Northern Dimension Action Plan, 2004-2006

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The present document follows the First Action Plan for the Northern Dimension¹, adopted by the European Council in Feira in June 2000, and expiring at the end of 2003. The main text sets out general principles and methodology, key objectives and priorities, and the mechanisms by which the implementation of Northern Dimension activities will be kept under review. The detailed activities which Northern Dimension partners will pursue in addressing each of these priorities are set out in annex 1.

In preparing the Second Northern Dimension Action Plan, the Commission has based its work on the conclusions of the Ministerial Conference on the Northern Dimension held in Luxembourg on 21 October 2002, and particularly on the *Guidelines for a new Action Plan*², adopted by this Conference and endorsed by the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council on 22 October 2002. This Second Action Plan represents the joint efforts of a wide range of Northern Dimension partners, and the Commission has drawn on a consultation process bringing together inputs from EU Member States and partner countries, from the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee, from regional bodies and associated organisations.

Reflecting these joint efforts, the Second Action Plan emphasises complementarity, subsidiarity and synergy among all Northern Dimension partners. The effectiveness of this interaction will be crucial to the achievement of our common objectives, and to the success of the Northern Dimension in the coming years.

1. THE NORTHERN DIMENSION VISION

Four years since its launching at the Helsinki European Council in December 1999, the Northern Dimension is today a visible demonstration of effective regional cooperation, contributing to the overall welfare of the European Union and neighbouring areas.

The Northern Dimension provides a common framework for the promotion of policy dialogue and concrete cooperation. The Northern Dimension concept covers a broad and diverse geographic area, stretching from the Arctic and sub-Arctic to the southern shores of the Baltic, and from North-West Russia in the East to Iceland and Greenland in the west. Its added value lies in the synergy and coherence that it creates across the activities implemented by all partners.

The Northern Dimension is an EU-led initiative. Its success depends on the active participation of all actors involved, whether at the national, regional or local level, among the business community, or among civil society generally. The key purpose of the present Action Plan is therefore to provide a clear operational framework for all Northern Dimension stakeholders, setting out strategic objectives, priorities and concrete activities. These need to be carried forward in a co-operative spirit based on inclusive participation, subsidiarity and complementarity, with an effective division of labour and overall co-ordination and monitoring.

2

Action Plan for the Northern Dimension with external and cross-border policies of the European Union 2000 – 2003, 9401/00, 14 June 2000; available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/north_dim/ndap/06_00_en.pdf.
Guidelines for a new Action Plan – Presidency Conclusions on the Future of the Northern Dimension Policies of the European Union, Luxembourg, 21 October 2002; available at:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/north_dim/doc/guidelines02.pdf.

Strong foundations for this work have already been laid with the First Action Plan, where the European Commission played a pivotal role in its implementation, and where EU Member States, partner countries, regional bodies, civil society, the business world and research institutions each carried forward important activities contributing to the overall goals of the Action Plan.

Looking forward, the Northern Dimension will take on an enhanced importance in the context of EU enlargement; the successful conclusion of the Accession Negotiations and the signature of the Accession Treaty with 10 Acceding Countries, including those directly involved in the Northern Dimension, takes the Northern Dimension into a new phase. This has been highlighted in the Commission's recent Communication on "Wider Europe -- Neighbourhood"³, and the Northern Dimension will have an important contribution to make in carrying forward the Union's new neighbourhood policy, building on shared interests and a common agenda between the enlarged Union and its neighbours.

The European Commission will continue to provide support for Northern Dimension activities through existing Community programmes, and will continue to work to enhance the coherence and inter-operability of the different Community instruments available for this purpose. The strength of the Northern Dimension will lie in the combined impact of the activities of all partners, including EU Member States and partner countries, international financial institutions, regional bodies and the private sector. The financing and co-ordination approach used in the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership is a useful model for other important Northern Dimension sectors, when a sufficient commitment of all stakeholders is assured.

The flow of information on Northern Dimension activities and achievements among partners will help to avoid duplication and overlap, identify gaps, and share best practices. The Commission is ready to compile and circulate this information among all interested stakeholders, but an effective information exchange will depend on the contributions of all partners.

2. The 2004-2006 Action Plan: overall objectives and priority sectors

The enlargement of the European Union will have implications for the region covered by the Northern Dimension. The Action Plan therefore addresses the opportunities and the challenges posed by this historic event, to help ensure that it benefits the entire region. In this context, strengthened interaction at all levels between Russia and the EU is essential.

The present Action Plan covers five broad priority sectors:

- economy, business and infrastructure;
- human resources, education, scientific research and health;
- the environment, nuclear safety and natural resources;
- cross-border cooperation and regional development;
- justice and home affairs.

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Wider Europe— Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours, COM(2003)104 final, 11 March 2003; available at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/we/doc/com03_104_en.pdf.

The Northern Dimension also pays special attention to regions with specific needs, such as Kaliningrad and the Arctic region.

The Action Plan respects internationally recognised principles of sustainable development, good governance, transparency and participation, gender equality, the rights of minorities, and the protection of indigenous peoples⁴.

In line with the EU Lisbon Strategy, the Action Plan encourages the adoption of mutually reinforcing economic, employment and social policies by all partners involved⁵.

3. SPECIFIC PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES, 2004-06

3.1. ECONOMY, BUSINESS, INFRASTRUCTURE

The closer integration of markets, strengthened economic relations with the Russian Federation and the completion of a modern infrastructure system are the key medium and long-term objectives for the Northern Dimension in this sector. To this end, specific priorities are identified in relation to:

- Trade, investment promotion, and business cooperation
- Infrastructure, including energy, transport, and telecommunications and information society.

3.1.1. Trade, Investment promotion and business co-operation

Sustainable and sustained economic growth in the Northern Dimension region is the key priority for the 2004-2006 period. The economic opportunities presented by enlargement of the Union must be fully exploited. A favourable business climate must be developed on both sides of the future EU-border through, inter alia, the implementation of economic reforms in the Russian Federation, and Russian efforts to integrate with the international economy (through WTO accession), and with the EU economy (through the Common European Economic Space initiative).

Further efforts will be made to remove technical and other barriers to trade and investment, to promote equal competition among economic actors, and to help develop a transparent financial sector. Special consideration must be given to SMEs, particularly in Russia, to help

- European Governance – A White Paper, COM(2001)428 final, 25 July 2001, available at: http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2001/com2001 0428en01.pdf;

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment social/equ opp/strategy/com2000 335 en.pdf;

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment social/employment strategy/index en.htm.

Recent Commission documents addressing these issues include for example:

⁻ A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: a European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development, COM(2001)264 final, 15 May 2001, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2001/com2001 0264en01.pdf;

⁻ Towards a Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005), COM(2000)335 final, 7 June 2000, available at:

⁻ Report from the Commission to the Council - Review of progress of working with indigenous peoples, COM(2002)291 final, 11 June 2002.

Adopted at the March 2000 Lisbon European Council, the European Employment Strategy (ESS) is designed to enable the European Union "to become the most competitive and knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion". More information on this issue is available at:

them take full advantage of EU market opportunities. Ongoing efforts to speed up border crossings and to fight corruption will be continued.

Measures must be taken to stimulate investments, taking account of the role which foreign investment can play and of the need to attract the kind of investment which can best promote development and innovation. The vision of the Baltic Sea region as a "Joint Investment Area" should be supported.

Business co-operation, trade and the economy must develop in the full respect of internationally recognised principles of sustainable development, in their environmental, social and economic dimensions, as well as gender issues and the protection of human rights.

Continued effective implementation of related support measures, notably through EU programmes such as Tacis and INTERREG, as well as through bilateral and regional cooperation programmes will have an important part to play here.

To help address the above priorities, Northern Dimension partners will therefore work to achieve the following key objectives (with specific activities as set out in annex):

- To improve the business climate, removing technical and other barriers to trade and investment and promoting co-operation among the business community across the region.
- To support economic reforms and regulatory convergence in Russia, reinforcing the transparency and predictability of trade relations.
- To promote Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), especially Russian SMEs, and their adjustment to the European market. Northern Dimension Partners will work to facilitate SMEs' access to capital, encourage the exchange of best practice and training and promote managerial and other skills and a better knowledge of regulations.
- To support industrial enterprises in their moves towards more sustainable production, in order to improve economic performance while addressing environmental concerns and offering socio-economic opportunities to the indigenous peoples of the region.
- To facilitate trade and economic relations through the improvement (or indeed the introduction) of integrated border management. Clearance time for border crossings of goods should be reduced to a maximum of two hours. Northern Dimension partners can achieve this objective particularly by encouraging the convergence of customs legislation, by fighting corruption, and through the modernisation of border-crossing infrastructure and the rationalisation of procedures at borders.

3.1.2. Energy

The Northern Dimension area is rich in natural resources and offers significant potential for the production and supply of energy, while at the same time possessing a unique environment that is particularly vulnerable to pollution or other side-effects of unsustainable development.

Infrastructure must be developed in order to provide better security of energy supply to the European continent. The work on energy issues must encompass the further development and integration of energy markets, the strengthening of EU – Russia dialogue on energy, the development of energy resources in an environmentally friendly way and the promotion of energy efficiency and saving. This energy partnership is principally aimed at enhancing the security of energy supplies to the EU and at improving investment conditions in Russia's

energy sector in order to upgrade the infrastructure, promote energy efficient and environmentally friendly technologies, and enhance energy conservation within Russia.

To help address the above priorities, Northern Dimension partners will therefore work to achieve the following key objectives (with specific activities as set out in annex):

- To develop the electricity and natural gas transportation networks in the Northern Dimension region, thus contributing to the competitive operation of the EU internal energy market and to the security of energy supplies across Europe. Northern Dimension partners will work to improve the co-ordination of energy production and supply, and to achieve full integration of the acceding countries in the EU priority axes for energy transportation and in a Common European Energy Market.
- To ensure that the development and utilisation of energy resources will be made more efficient and environmentally friendly; Northern Dimension partners will also endeavour to ensure safe transportation of energy materials, to explore the possibilities for increased use of renewable energy and to establish a testing ground for flexible mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol in the Baltic Sea Region.
- The European Union and the Russian Federation will continue their work to strengthen the EU-Russia Energy Dialogue⁶, launched at the EU-Russia Summit of October 2000 with the purpose to improve energy cooperation.

3.1.3. Transport

The improvement of the transport infrastructure in the Northern Dimension area is vital for the economic development of the region, with the key priorities being the development of a multi-modal transport system improving the connections within the region and with the neighbouring countries, the creation of an environmentally friendly integrated transport and communications market, the promotion of an efficient use of existing infrastructure, and the further realisation of the Pan-European transport network in partner countries. Safety levels within all modes of transport must be enhanced, in particular for maritime safety, including scientific research support.

To help address the above priorities, Northern Dimension partners will therefore work to achieve the following key objectives (with specific activities as set out in annex):

- To address bottlenecks and choke points in the Northern Dimension region, creating at the same time an environmentally friendly transport network integrating accession countries. The basis for such a work will be provided by the Commission revision of the Guidelines for the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and the Commission White Paper "European Transport Policy for 2010".
- To increase safety levels within all modes of transport. High priority will be attributed, in particular, to maritime safety, with a view to protecting the marine environment from accidents that threaten sea and coastal ecosystems as well as the socio-economic life of populations involved. Scientific research will support such activities.

The EU-Russia Energy Partnership: http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy transport/en/lpi en 3.html.

European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to Decide, *COM(2001)370 final, 12 September 2001, available at:* http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy_transport/en/lb_en.html.

3.1.4. Telecommunications and Information Society

Information and communication technology (ICT) will play a crucial role in the development of a prosperous and sustainable Northern Dimension region in the coming years. The Northern Dimension region can develop a leading knowledge-based economy, in particular through follow-up of the Northern eDimension Action Plan, launched in 2001.

To help address the above priorities, Northern Dimension partners will therefore work to achieve the following key objectives (with specific activities as set out in annex):

- To promote the co-ordinated development of telecommunications, information society networks and services in the Northern Dimension region, including the regulatory and administrative framework. A co-ordinated effort should be made to support ICT development in Northwest Russia, to help avoid the development of a technology and infrastructure gap.
- Bearing in mind the importance of ICT in helping the region overcome the disadvantages caused by long distances and a harsh climate, Northern Dimension partners will make every effort to accelerate the transition of the region to an information society, to ensure better living conditions and access to modern services, including telemedicine and elearning.

3.2. HUMAN RESOURCES, EDUCATION, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND PUBLIC HEALTH

The Northern Dimension region has a rich supply of human resources and a high scientific potential. The future of the whole area, including the Arctic, and the social well-being and economic growth of the region will depend to a large extent on the development of this potential.

3.2.1. Human Resources and Employment, Education/Training and Culture

To assist in unlocking the rich supply of human resources and high scientific potential of the region, the key objective is to give priority attention to capacity building, education and training/retraining, scientific research and health. Outdated qualifications and skills should be brought to meet modern technological demands. Students and researchers must be able to maximise the opportunities available to them notably through the promotion of university exchanges and the use of virtual learning facilities in the promotion of sustainable economic growth.

Cultural development, (including cultural tourism) should be strengthened, by mobilising and co-ordinating national, regional and local authorities, NGOs, private enterprise and civil society in the preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of cultural diversity.

To help address the above priorities, Northern Dimension partners will therefore work to achieve the following key objectives (with specific activities as set out in annex):

To promote the creation of a "knowledge-based region" through joint projects, networking and mobility in the fields of education and training, research, culture and youth, and by bringing information and learning opportunities to remote areas through Internet-based and other tools. To promote a dialogue that enables the region to develop as a dynamic and open cultural area, raising awareness of cultural heritage, and promoting local and regional development.

3.2.2. Scientific Research

Scientific research is vital to the development of the region, with the key objective being to ensure that research activity is effectively co-ordinated and recognises the impact of ongoing economic, environmental, political and social change in the region. Co-operation among enterprises, universities and the scientific community should be enhanced with a view to fostering employment creation.

The present Action Plan therefore supports the goal of promoting scientific research in the Northern Dimension area, with a focus on climate change and the economic, social and environmental impacts caused by climate variability and change.

Specific attention must be given to research relating to the development of infrastructure and materials suitable for harsh climatic conditions, the improvement of environmentally sound exploration, extraction and transport technologies for fossil energy and minerals, the development of appropriate transport policies and technologies, and the analysis of socioeconomic and environmental changes across the region. In the formulation of research policies and projects, it will be important to seek consultations not only with the various scientific research institutions but also with bodies such as the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.

To help address the above priorities, Northern Dimension partners will therefore work to achieve the following key objectives (with specific activities as set out in annex):

- To improve communication and information exchange among all sectors of the scientific community in Russia and in the enlarged EU, encouraging at the same time the involvement of young researchers. This will improve the dissemination of information to the scientific community at large in the region and create a mechanism for stimulating cooperation between the many scientific institutes and universities in the North.
- To strengthen research and technology-development activities, particularly in sectors relating to climate change, environmental protection, sustainable management and utilisation of natural resources, safety and security of energy supplies, social and economic developments in the region.

3.2.3. Public Health

High priority must be attached to the fight against communicable diseases (especially tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS) in Northwest Russia and the accession countries, as well as to the goal of addressing problems related to general health and social wellbeing, such as the use of illicit drugs, alcoholism and other life-style related conditions. Society as a whole must be active in health promotion and in the enhancement of healthy lifestyles. Strengthening international co-operation at all levels is key for the achievement of such objectives, inter alia

through the establishment of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing⁸.

In addressing these issues, activities will be developed in accordance with the EU strategy on public health (the EU Public Health Programme 2003-2008⁹), and with the recommendations adopted by the Fourth Baltic Sea States Summit in St Petersburg on 10 June 2002 on the threat of communicable diseases¹⁰.

To help address the above priorities, Northern Dimension partners will therefore work to achieve the following key objectives (with specific activities as set out in annex):

- To address the challenges posed by major communicable diseases, and particularly tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. A special attention will be paid to health problems in children and young people, addressing also the social and economic roots of such diseases.
- To enhance and extend international cooperation on public health issues more broadly, to address also the social determinants of health problems, the impact of the environment on citizens' health and the structural reform of health services across the region.

3.3. Environment, Nuclear Safety and Natural Resources

3.3.1. Environment

The vast environmental problems in the region are well known, including also such specific factors as the particularly severe impact of climate change in the high north, and the negative consequences of pollution on the fragile marine ecosystem and the Arctic.

It is beyond the capacity of any country or organisation to tackle these trans-boundary problems single-handed. Concerted and co-ordinated action is essential, both on the convergence of environmental standards and policies, and on funding joint cooperation activities. The Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership provides a useful example of how a concerted approach can effectively address urgent problems. In this work, Northern Dimension partners must take full account of monitoring reports provided by the European Union, HELCOM, Baltic 21 and the Arctic Council.

To help address the above priorities, Northern Dimension partners will therefore work to achieve the following key objectives (with specific activities as set out in annex):

- To strengthen the EU-Russia dialogue on environmental issues in the framework of the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement, and work for the full respect of international conventions on environment
- To monitor and tackle pollutants throughout the region, principally chemicals, persistent organic pollutants (POPs), heavy metals, toxic and urban waste, in relation to inland

A final decision on the establishment of such Partnership will be taken in a high-level meeting due to be organised in Norway in October 2003. More information on this initiative is available at: www.stakes.fi/ndpartnership.

Decision No 1786/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 adopting a *Programme of Community action in the field of public health (2003-2008)*; available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph programme/programme en.htm.

Statement from the 4th Baltic Sea States Summit on the Threat of Communicable Diseases, St Petersburg, 10 June 2001; available at http://www.cbss.st/documents/meetingshead_government/stpetersburg2002/.

waters and the Arctic as well as the Barents and Baltic Seas. Particular attention will also be paid to the problem of air pollution and to the promotion of cleaner production systems.

- To make full use of multilateral funding mechanisms, such as the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP) and the Nordic Environmental Development Fund.

3.3.2. Nuclear Safety

The immense problems of nuclear waste storage and disposal in the Northern Dimension region, particularly in Northwest Russia are of great concern (including spent nuclear fuel from decommissioned submarines and icebreakers, inadequate or absent storage facilities, and other wastes such as mixed wastes and liquid wastes).

Ensuring the safe use of nuclear power and the safe management of spent nuclear fuels and radioactive waste is a priority in the Northern Dimension area. The main problems are the need to provide safe storage facilities for the spent nuclear fuel removed from icebreakers and nuclear powered submarines, the management of a wide variety of radioactive wastes, including mixed and liquid wastes, and the management of submarines that have been taken out of service. Another urgent priority in the region is the early closure and decommissioning of nuclear reactors "at risk". The key objective is to achieve an adequate level of safety across the region.

The present Action Plan thus supports close multilateral co-operation between national authorities, including on legal initiatives such as the agreement on the Multilateral Nuclear Environmental Programme in the Russian Federation. This will include the effective and timely implementation of projects through the Nuclear Window of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership Support Fund, as well as upgraded monitoring procedures and an effective exchange of information and expertise on the management of nuclear material.

To help address the above priorities, Northern Dimension partners will therefore work to achieve the following key objectives (with specific activities as set out in annex):

- To implement projects through the Nuclear Window of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership Support Fund without delay, following the signature of the agreement establishing a Multilateral Nuclear Environmental Programme in the Russian Federation (MNEPR). Priority will be given to the management of spent nuclear fuel and nuclear waste, and the decommissioning of nuclear facilities and submarines.
- To strengthen monitoring and the protection of the environment from radiation through increased co-operation, including improved co-ordination of national plans for dealing with nuclear safety incidents in the region.

3.3.3. Natural Resources

The region is rich in natural resources, particularly oil, minerals and timber. These resources are of crucial importance for the economic development of the local communities, although they are under significant pressure. Sustainable use of natural resources is vital if the long-term economic potential of the region is to be realised without negatively affecting the sensitive ecological balance of the area or the indigenous communities that depend on these resources.

To help address these priorities, Northern Dimension partners will therefore work to achieve the following key objective (with specific activities as set out in annex):

To help ensure that Northern and Arctic eco-systems and their bio-diversity shall remain viable, vigorous and able to sustain human socio-economic needs, and to encourage the responsible and sustainable utilisation of forests and fish stocks, with the active participation of local actors, communities, SMEs and indigenous peoples in the decisionmaking process.

3.4. CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION

Cross-border co-operation must contribute to promoting regional economic development and integration of the whole Northern Dimension area. The responsibility to initiate cooperation among bordering regions based on a genuine partnership lies mainly with the regions themselves. The relevant EU financial instruments must support this co-operation as efficiently as possible. There is also a need to co-ordinate EU and bilateral funds to facilitate co-operation across the border with Russia within the Northern Dimension area.

The various cross-border co-operation arrangements in the area, including Euro-regions and the co-operation between Russia and Lithuania based on the *Nida-initiative*, can form a basis for intensified work focused on the borders with Russia in the Northern Dimension region. To help address the above priorities, Northern Dimension partners will therefore work to achieve the following key objectives (with specific activities as set out in annex):

- To implement cross-border co-operation initiatives on priority themes such as economic and social development, environmental protection, transport and telecommunication, border crossings and border management, public health, and cultural exchanges.
- To strengthen co-ordination among funding programmes operated by the European Union and by other sources, including international financial institutions and the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Russian Federation shall be involved in the co-financing of activities as much as possible. The European Commission will make every effort to improve the coordination of EU programmes, and particularly Tacis and INTERREG, including the possible establishment of a New Neighbourhood Instrument as foreseen in the Communication on "Wider Europe: Neighbourhood".
- To further stimulate the close involvement of local actors, communities and administrations, strengthening subsidiarity and local ownership of projects. Better results will be achieved by building on existing examples of tri-partite co-operation and by using the expertise of regional and sub-regional bodies such as the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation, the Union of Baltic Cities and the Barents Regional Council.
- To address the key challenges faced by the Kaliningrad region in its future development as a Russian exclave surrounded by the European Union. The EU, the Russian Federation and other partners will work on the implementation of cross-border projects dealing with economic and social development, environmental issues, health issues, the fight against organised crime as well as adequate infrastructure on the border crossings and efficient border management.

3.5. JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

3.5.1. Combating organised crime

Organised crime remains a considerable problem in the region, demanding a concerted effort from all partner countries. A co-ordinated and effective response must be made to problems

such as economic crime, money laundering, illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings.

To help address the above priorities, Northern Dimension partners will therefore work to achieve the following key objectives (with specific activities as set out in annex):

- To improve the co-ordination among national administrations and police forces in order to optimise the use of resources, develop concrete operational measures between the EU and Russia, and increase the effectiveness of law enforcement cooperation.
- To address trafficking in human beings and drugs, and tackle crime targeting children and women.
- The EU and the Russian Federation will work for the rapid and effective implementation of the EU-Russia Action Plan against organised crime and other initiatives designed to integrate the activities and expertise of the respective national, regional and local authorities, promote the sharing of intelligence and priorities and improve support for the victims of crime.

3.5.2. Integrated border management

The development of effective border management is crucial to efforts to avoid the emergence of new dividing lines in Europe, while helping to ensure mutual security, the respect of law and cross-border contacts. The present Action Plan supports the goals of fostering secure and efficient management of the EU-Russia border, to prevent illegal movements but allow easy passage for legitimate trade and travel, reducing waiting times, improving infrastructure, increased co-operation between relevant border authorities, and the harmonisation of legislation, standards and procedures.

The economic aspects of improved border management are addressed under section 3.1 above. In addition, Northern Dimension partners will work to achieve the following key objective (with specific activities as set out in annex):

- To combat illegal immigration and other cross-border crime, and facilitate legitimate trade and travel, through improved and integrated border management.

3.5.3. Civil Protection

Ensuring effective standards and procedures for public safety and participation in the governmental processes is of particular relevance to the Northern Dimension area; a key priority will be the development of a common space in which people feel secure.

The new Action Plan therefore supports the goal of improving civil protection, with a particular focus on the Baltic and Barents regions, and to further developing the Euro-Baltic programme.

It will be important to develop the link between civil society and government or business decision-making, to harmonise legislation, and exchange experience and expertise in the fields of safety practices and rescue management.

To help address these priorities, Northern Dimension partners will therefore work to achieve the following key objective (with specific activities as set out in annex):

- To improve and encourage the convergence of safety procedures, promoting at the same time civil protection, good governance and direct public participation in project planning.

3.6. CROSS-CUTTING THEMES: KALININGRAD AND THE ARCTIC REGION

As noted above, Kaliningrad and the Arctic region represent two prominent examples of specific regions with specific needs. To ensure a comprehensive attention to these needs, they have been treated here as cross-cutting issues, main-streamed within each key priority of the Action Plan.

3.6.1. Kaliningrad

The responsibility for the development of the Kaliningrad *Oblast* of Russia lies of course with the Russian Federation. Given its particular geographic situation as a Russian exclave surrounded by the European Union it is however particularly important to enhance dialogue and cooperation between Kaliningrad and neighbouring Northern Dimension partners.

All five priority sectors covered in the present Action Plan have particular relevance for Kaliningrad. Whether in the economic, human resource, environment, cross-border or JHA fields, Northern Dimension activities will be important in allowing Kaliningrad to take full advantage of the opportunities created by EU enlargement.

In the economic field, particular attention will be given to building an enhanced framework for trade and investment, supporting administrative reform, promoting business-to-business links and SMEs development, and ensuring smooth border management; the security of energy supply and the further development of regional transport networks will likewise be emphasised.

Attention will also be given to support for human resource development, including vocational and business education, educational exchanges and other joint projects in the field of education, research, culture and youth, as well as joint work to combat threats to public health

Environmental concerns will be addressed, with a view to resolving existing problems (especially water and soil pollution, urban wastes and chemicals), as well as helping ensure the sustainable development of the region in future. The NDEP Support Fund, as well as financial support provided by international financial institutions and other Northern Dimension partners on a bilateral basis, can help address such challenges.

Cross-border cooperation, focusing on Kaliningrad and the neighbouring regions of the EU, will have a particular importance in the economic, social and environmental fields, as well as in promoting people-to-people contacts at the local level.

Joint efforts to combat organised crime, smuggling, illegal migration and trafficking in human beings will help ensure mutual security and the respect of law for the benefit of all.

The European Commission has already made a special effort in many of these areas, and will continue and strengthen these efforts during the life of the new Action Plan. As an example, the Tacis Indicative Programme for Russia for the period 2004-06 includes a special package for Kaliningrad, costed at some €25m over these three years and focusing in particular on sectors such as administrative reform and business development, public health, education, and cross-border cooperation. This is in addition to broader efforts being carried out through the

Tacis Russian national programme, and through the NDEP, which are also of benefit to Kaliningrad.

3.6.2. The Arctic

The northernmost areas of the region require a special attention, bearing in mind the harsh climatic conditions, the fragile environment increasingly threatened by pollution of various kinds, high infrastructure costs in linking scarcely populated areas across long distances, and health problems affecting the indigenous peoples living in the high north.

All five priority sectors covered in the present Action Plan are also relevant for the Arctic, even if the economic, human resource, and environment sectors are likely to have a primary importance. It will however be particularly important to enhance broader international cooperation on such themes, involving also partners such as the US and Canada which face similar concerns for their Arctic and Sub-Arctic areas.

Encouraging the economic development of the Arctic region is of crucial importance; such development, however, must take place in full respect of the fragile environmental situation of the region, and must involve local populations and indigenous people in the decision-making process at all levels. Infrastructure issues will have a particular importance, notably with respect to the role which improved ICT networks can play in helping to overcome the constraints of distance and climate.

ICT also has a crucial role to play in fostering human development through distance learning, and in encouraging and preserving local cultures, indigenous languages and cultural heritage. The University of the Arctic provides a good example of such initiatives.

Enhanced environmental monitoring in the Arctic, and joint efforts to protect the Arctic environment from chemical, POP and nuclear pollution will be strengthened by building on the research work carried out by the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. The Arctic is also an important global laboratory, and Northern Dimension partners will promote further work in this field through, inter alia, RTD programmes of the EU and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Many of the sectors encompassed in the present Action Plan are of particular relevance for Greenland, as acknowledged by the Commission in a recent communication to the Council and the European Parliament¹¹. Whenever possible and appropriate, Greenland should be involved in the implementation of this Action Plan through Community programmes open to Greenlandic participation.

In addition, and looking to the wider North, the EU will also pursue its cooperation with the US and Canada in the context of the New Transatlantic Agenda¹² with the US and the Joint Statement on Northern Co-operation with Canada¹³. This can help build favourable synergies

¹¹ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - *Mid term review of the fourth fisheries protocol between the EU and Greenland*, COM(2002)697 of 3.12.2002.

The full text of the New Transatlantic Agenda (NTA), signed at the Madrid EU-US Summit on 3 December 1995, is available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/us/new_transatlantic_agenda/text.htm.

The Joint Statement on Northern Co-operation was issued at the EU-Canada Summit held in Ottawa on 16 December 1999. The Joint Statement is available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/canada/summit_12_99/north_cooperation.htm.

in fields such as environment, energy, nuclear safety, public health, indigenous peoples and the promotion of sustainable development in circumpolar and adjacent regions.

4. MONITORING AND REVIEW MECHANISMS

The wide range of activities to be carried forward under the Northern Dimension Action Plan, and the need for all partners to work together in a spirit of complementarity and subsidiarity, makes it imperative to have adequate and timely mechanisms for monitoring progress, reviewing achievements and identifying shortcomings. These mechanisms can only be effective if based on the contributions of all partners involved.

The availability of up-to-date and readily-accessible information on the Northern Dimension activities and achievements will also enhance the visibility of our work for all partners concerned (and for the public as a whole), making it possible to clearly identify what has been achieved and by whom, what is underway or under preparation and what remains to be done.

In the context of the First Action Plan, the European Commission has already provided two annual reports on Northern Dimension activities¹⁴. A third such report will be produced by the end of 2003. These documents are essential in informing both the EU Council and the European Parliament on the progress made in the implementation of the Northern Dimension Action Plan, fully involving these institutions in the monitoring and review mechanism. Other reports, such as the annual progress report on *EU-Canada co-operation on northern issues*¹⁵, can also contribute to the overall assessment of the progress achieved on specific issues in the Northern Dimension region.

The 2001 and 2002 Commission reports gave a comprehensive overview of activities carried out by the European Community in pursuit of Northern Dimension objectives and priorities, but were limited in that they could not give a comprehensive account of relevant activities carried out by other Northern Dimension partners. It will be important to correct this deficiency during the implementation of the Second Action Plan.-. In accordance with its overall co-ordination role, the European Commission will compile these comprehensive annual reports, drawing on contributions received from all partners

In addition to these annual reports (and as the basis on which later reports can be compiled), it will also be useful to consider the establishment of an Internet-based system of providing timely updates on key activities. Such a system, whose effectiveness would very much depend on the active contributions of all partners, could be prepared in connection with the entry into force of the present Action Plan.

Building on this regular and comprehensive reporting, Northern Dimension partners will be able to keep the progress and achievements of the Action Plan under regular review. To this

15

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/canada/sum12_02/index.htm#3.

A Northern Dimension for the Policies of the Union, document presented at the Ministerial Conference held in Luxembourg on 9 April 2001.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/north_dim/conf/formin2/invent_01.pdf, and the 2002 Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Northern Dimension Action Plan, Commission Staff Working Paper, SEC(2002) 1296, 26.11.2002,

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/north_dim/doc/progrep02.pdf.

EU-Canada annual reports on the Co-operation on Northern Issues are produced following the 1999 Joint Statement on Northern Co-operation (see footnote 7). The latest Progress Report on EU-Canada co-operation on Northern Issues was adopted by the EU-Canada Summit held in Ottawa on 19 December 2002. The document is available at:

end, a meeting of Senior Officials should be convened annually to assess the implementation of the Action Plan, review progress to date and identify any areas in which a further stimulus might be necessary. Senior Officials will also be responsible for providing political guidance on the implementation of the Action Plan, and on its future development. In this connection, the Senior Officials meeting in 2005 will be able to make recommendations on the follow-up to the Second Action Plan, and on the issues to be addressed after 2006.

These annual meetings of Senior Officials should normally be held in the spring of each year, and should bring together representatives from European Union institutions, EU Member States, Partner Countries, Northern Dimension regional bodies, and the international financial institutions. The participation of representatives of regional and local authorities, of the business community and of civil society should be encouraged.

To provide for the broad participation of civil society groups in reviewing progress under the Action Plan, it would also be helpful if the European Economic and Social Committee would be able to organise annual Fora on the implementation of the Action Plan, bringing together representatives from the social and economic organisations represented in the Committee. This would build on the useful experience of similar fora organised in 2001 and 2003. In the same vein, it would be valuable if the EU Committee of the Regions might organise similar fora on a regular basis, bringing together representatives of local and regional administrations of the Northern Dimension area.

ANNEX 1

The Second Northern Dimension Action Plan, 2004-06

Specific activities to be pursued in addressing the priority objectives

set in the Action Plan

The priority objectives to be addressed under the Second Northern Dimension Action Plan are set out in the main text, for each of the five priority sectors included in the Action Plan. This annex, which represents an integral part of the Action Plan, elaborates on these objectives by setting out the specific activities, in terms of both dialogue and cooperation actions, which Northern Dimension partners will pursue in implementing the Action Plan and addressing these priority objectives.

Many of the activities listed here have been proposed by EU Member States, partner countries or regional bodies in the context of the wide consultation process carried out by the Commission from November 2002 to March 2003. Others have been proposed by the Commission, building on and strengthening existing EU dialogues or programmes. The active implementation of these activities, by Northern Dimension partners as a whole or bilaterally, by the different regional bodies and other stakeholders, will ensure that the wide range of issues covered by the Northern Dimension are most effectively addressed.

The list of activities given here should not however be considered as exhaustive, since there are other initiatives under implementation or being developed by individual partners that can also contribute effectively to the achievement of the key Action Plan objectives. It will be important in reviewing progress towards these objectives that all relevant activities are kept in mind.

In the implementation of all the objectives of the Action Plan, a key role will be played by the EU-Russia PCA dialogue, by Community programmes such as Tacis, Phare and INTERREG, and in the future by Structural Funds (also for the new Member States) and by the activities of all Northern Dimension partners, including regional bodies and other stakeholders.

Northern Dimension activities, by priority objective, 2004-06

1. ECONOMY, BUSINESS, INFRASTRUCTURE

1.1. Trade, Investment promotion and business co-operation

To improve the framework conditions required for the establishment of a favourable business climate, including inter alia the removal of technical and other barriers to trade and investment and enhanced networking and co-operation among the business community across the region.

• Continued effective pursuit by the European Union and the Russian Federation of the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement dialogue in fields related to economic reform, regulatory convergence and competition policy. Continued efforts in the framework of the creation of a EU/Russia Common European Economic Space, building on the joint concept which should be agreed by end-2003. This means, inter alia, removal of non-tariff barriers to trade.

To support economic reforms and regulatory convergence in Russia, reinforcing the transparency and predictability of trade relations.

- Enhanced co-operation among all partners to identify and remove obstacles to trade and investment through appropriate studies, benchmarking and reporting.
- Strengthened dialogue, networking and co-operation among the business community across the region (all partners), including notably activities carried out through such bodies as EU-Russian Industrialists' Round Table, the *ScanBelt* project supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers and the *BaltPartenariat* of the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association
- Strengthened dialogue, networking and co-operation among consumers' groups and regulatory bodies across the region, building on the work being carried out by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

To promote the creation and development of SMEs, especially Russian SMEs, and their adjustment to the European market. Northern Dimension Partners will work to facilitate SMEs' access to capital, encourage the exchange of best practice and training and promote better knowledge of regulations.

- Continued promotion and development of SMEs on the basis of the European Charter for Small Enterprises, adopted by the Feira European Council in June 2000¹⁶ and the Nordic Charter for Small Innovative Companies, Entrepreneurs and Independent Inventors adopted by the Nordic Ministers of Industry on 7 October 2002.
- Enhanced participation of SMEs and other stakeholders from Member States, acceding countries, Iceland and Norway in the EU Multi-annual Programme for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship in order to improve the business environment and

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http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enlargement/charter/index.htm.

implement the European Charter. This must be done through the exchange of best practice and the stimulation of the debate between public authorities and the business community on the most efficient policy tools and measures to foster business development. Through the European Investment Fund it is now possible for financial institutions in Member States and acceding Countries to operate in the sector of risk capital and borrowing to SMEs. Support is provided by the network of Euro-Info Centres, 68 of which presently cover the Northern Dimension region¹⁷.

- Continued support provided to Nordic SMEs by the Nordic Project Fund (Nopef Nordic Council of Ministers), through loans and grants for co-financing of feasibility studies aiming at an investment into a new market. During the period 2004 2006 Nopef will start at least 300 new feasibility studies in Northwest Russia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The result will be around 120 new investments, especially in Northwest Russia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, but also in Poland and Ukraine. Russia will in 2004-2006 continue to be the main market of Nopef with 25% of the feasibility studies.
- Continued support provided by the CBSS Working Group on Economic Cooperation in benchmarking and circulating information on best practice through its Internet gateway system¹⁸.
- Pursuit of the stimulation of competitive and innovative business through projects such as CONNECT, supported by INTERREG until May 2005, involving 25 regional technology transfer agencies in Norway, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

To support industrial enterprises in their moves towards more sustainable production, in order to improve economic performance while addressing environmental concerns and offering socio-economic opportunities to the indigenous peoples of the region.

- Continued financial support to be provided by the Nordic Finance Group, consisting of the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB), the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO), the Northern Development Fund (NDF) and the Nordic Project Fund (*Nopef*) to companies and SMEs working on cleaner production programmes.
- Continued effective implementation of Cleaner Production programmes, such as training courses, introduced in the Russian part of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, under the supervision of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and with financial support from NEFCO Revolving Fund for Cleaner Production.
- Pursuit of dialogue and networking by all Northern Dimension partners on economic incentives and eco-efficiency tools, implementation of international conventions and agreements to promote management of environmental issues in industry.

18

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/networks/eic/eic.html. www.balticmarket.org.

- Continued implementation of initiatives such as the COMPASS project (Competitive Alternatives for Sustainable Private Sector Investments in the Baltic Sea Region) led by Northern German Laender, with INTERREG funding.
- Strengthened attention to be paid by all Northern Dimension partners to indigenous interests in relation to economic activities, and in particular extractive industry, with a view to protecting inherited rights of self-determination, land rights and cultural rights of indigenous peoples of the region.

To facilitate trade and economic relations along the old and new border of the European Union, through the improvement of integrated border management. Clearance time for border crossings of goods should be reduced to a maximum of two hours. Northern Dimension partners will achieve this objective particularly by encouraging the convergence of custom legislation, by fighting corruption, and through the modernisation of border-crossing infrastructure and the rationalisation of procedures at borders.

- Continued effective implementation of Tacis projects assisting the modernisation of border-crossing points along the border of the enlarged Union.
- Continued construction or modernisation of Polish border-crossings, in particular along the border with the Kaliningrad Oblast. Grzechotki Mamonovo II border crossing and modernisation of Gołdap Gusev crossing.
- Continued construction or modernisation of Lithuanian border-crossings, in particular along the border with the Kaliningrad Oblast. Border inspection posts constructed with Phare assistance in Kybartai (rail) and Panemune (road).
- Enhanced co-operation between Northern Dimension national administrations, in particular through the Task Force II for Customs Co-operation under the Working Group for Economic Co-operation of the BEAC and the CBSS Working Group for Economic Co-operation, the Baltic Sea Region Border Control Conference (BSR-BCCC), the Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association (BCCA) and the Business Advisory Council (BAC).
- Implementation of projects such as *Telematics in Foreign Trade Logistics and Delivery Management* (TEDIM), aimed at developing logistics and related information processing in Baltic Sea region. TEDIM development areas relate to border crossing IT procedures, information management on rail and at sea, logistical service networks and harmonising this potential. Participating companies provide project funding, but funding has also been available from EU TEN Transport, INTERREG, Phare and Tacis.
- Strengthened co-operation for the introduction or improvement of integrated border management with the full engagement of all parties involved, according to the methodology of the *Laufzettel* project, developed within the framework of the *Baltic Sea Customs Conference* (BSCC).

1.2. Energy

To help develop the electricity and natural gas networks in the Northern Dimension region, thus contributing to the competitive operation of the EU internal energy market and to the security of energy supplies across Europe. Northern Dimension partners will work to improve

the co-ordination of energy production and supply, and to achieve full integration of the accession countries in the EU priority axes for energy networks and into a Common European Energy Market.

- Continued efforts by the European Commission to identify the priorities for energy infrastructures. These will be established in the revised Guidelines for Trans-European Energy Networks (TEN-E), to be adopted by the Commission in 2003. The full integration of the accession countries in the EU priority axes for energy networks will be also analysed in the course of 2003, including the increased transportation of oil by pipelines. The Commission's recent Communication on energy policy for the enlarged European Union¹⁹ sets guidelines to face up to the challenges of growing external energy dependence between the EU and its neighbouring countries. It also examines the need to address infrastructure issues on a regional level, to diversify sources of energy, at both geographical and technological level, and to broaden the basis for energy trade in Europe and its adjoining countries.
- Continued preparations for an electricity connection (Power Bridge) between Lithuania and Poland.
- Further encouragement to the development of mutually beneficial regional electricity market, through European Commission participation in the joint committee of Baltic Sea states on electric power industry BALTREL²⁰, on the basis of the 2002 study: "Towards a Common electricity Market in the Baltic Sea region", which presented an analysis of the main issues for the development of an open electricity market in the Baltic Sea region.
- Further encouragement to the work of Baltic Gas with thirteen participating gas companies to further develop the gas pipeline and gas storage infrastructure in the region.
- Enhanced dialogue in the framework of the Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation (BASREC), encompassing Denmark, Poland, Germany, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway and Iceland. The European Commission is represented by the Directorate General for Energy and Transport.
- Continued implementation of projects such as BalticCHAIN²¹ (funded by the INTERREG Programme) on provision of legislative information to generate concrete projects and establish structures such as a Project Preparation Fund or Guarantee Agencies.

The European Union and the Russian Federation will continue their work to strengthen the EU-Russia Energy Dialogue²², launched at the EU-Russia Summit of October 2000 with the purpose to improve energy cooperation.

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Commission Communication On the Development of Energy Policy for the Enlarged European Union its neighbours and partner countries, COM(2003)262 Final of 13 May 2003.

BALTREL – Baltic Ring Electricity Co-operation Committee, gathering 18 organisations with operations in 11 countries. For more information: http://www.baltrel.com/.

BalticCHAIN – Baltic Clearing House and Information Network

http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy_transport/en/lpi_en_3.html.

- Continued EU-Russia dialogue and implementation of joint projects in the following areas: improvement of the energy legal framework, security of the energy transport networks, new energy transport infrastructure, legal security for long term energy supplies, technology co-operation and energy efficiency.
- Identification and development of opportunities for energy saving initiatives in the Russian Federation using Kaliningrad, Archangelsk and Astrakhan (the latter outside the Northern Dimension region) as pilot regions. A huge potential for energy saving exists in the Russian Federation amounting to an estimated annual saving of 400 Million ton oil equivalent (Mtoe).
- Implementation of the North European Gas Pipeline²³, which is part of one of the EU's TEN-E priority axes and also one of the projects defined as being of "common interest" in the EU-Russia Energy Dialogue. An important element of the North European Gas Pipeline is the possibility of building spur lines, from the main trunk, connecting with the Swedish East Coast close to Stockholm and to the Kaliningrad Oblast. Spur lines to the new Member States should also be taken into consideration.

To ensure that the development and utilisation of energy resources will be made more efficient and environmentally friendly, Northern Dimension partners will also endeavour to ensure safe transportation of energy materials, to explore the possibilities for increased use of renewable energy and to establish a testing ground for flexible mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol in the Baltic Sea Region.

- Continued attention to be paid to the safe transport of oil by ship from ports at the Baltic Sea, such as, Ventspils in Latvia and Butinge in Lithuania, Primorsk and potentially from Murmansk in Russia. Concrete initiatives to improve the situation are addressed under Maritime Safety (see below). This question will be addressed more globally in the context of the projects of common interest under the EU-Russia Energy Dialogue.
- Continuation of the work of the Energy Efficiency Centres (Murmansk, Kirovsk, Petrozavodsk, and Arkhangelsk), which are also Barents Energy Focal Points. The centres are engaged in a range of promotional and informational activities, and they serve a valuable function as contact points between energy companies, authorities, consultants and lenders.
- Promote and improve the use of wind energy, inter alia through the "Wind Energy in the Baltic Sea Region" INTERREG project, which will run until January 2006, promoted by the Northern German Laender.
- Increased co-operation among all Northern Dimension partners, including local/regional authorities, with a view to establishing a testing ground for flexible mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol in the Baltic Sea Region as an instrument for deepened energy co-operation, investment and policy co-ordination in the whole area.

The North European Gas Pipeline would bring gas from Northern Russia to Germany and then onwards to the Netherlands and the UK.

1.3. Transport

To address bottlenecks and choke points in the Northern Dimension region, creating at the same time an environmentally friendly transport network integrating accession countries. The basis for such a work will be provided by the Commission revision of the Guidelines for the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and the Commission White Paper "European Transport Policy for 2010"²⁴.

- Continued work of the *High Level Group*, established by the European Commission and chaired by K. Van Miert (former Vice-President of the Commission), composed of representatives from Member States and Accession countries. The Group will assist the Commission with the preparation of a proposal for a far-reaching revision of the Decision (1692/96) related to the Community priorities for the development of the TEN-T.
- Strengthened integration of accession Countries in the TEN-T system, in accordance to the principles and objectives laid out in a Commission Communication to be issued in 2003.
- Strengthened implementation of *Pan-European Corridors and Areas*, notably Pan-European Corridors I and IA (Helsinki to Warsaw and to Gdansk, via Tallinn, Riga and Kaunas), and Corridor IX (Helsinki to St Petersburg, Moscow and Pskov, Kiev, and on to Chisinau and to Alexandropoulis), as well as the links from Kaliningrad and Klaipeda via Vilnius to Minsk.
- Implementation of the satellite navigation system *Galileo*, which can have a huge potential impact on the transport infrastructure in the Northern Dimension region. The shortcomings of currently available satellite navigation services are accentuated under the particular geographic and demographic conditions of the Northern Dimension countries. Support will have to be given by the European Commission and EU Member States to the implementation of Galileo, designed to overcome these shortcomings and to boost innovation in the region. The system will significantly improve the availability of reliable open and protected navigation services for transport and search and rescue operations. Moreover, Galileo will reduce dependence of critical infrastructures (power generation, banking etc) on time synchronisation services of the GPS system controlled solely by the US government.
- Continued implementation of the 2003-2005 Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area (BEATA), aimed at producing a series of studies and plans covering coherently the entire Barents Region (forecasts and models of passenger and freight transport). This will eventually lead to a compilation of national transport investment programs that support the regional perspective and elimination of border constraints. The activities will contribute to the development of an efficient, sustainable transport system focusing on the improvement of necessary east-west transport possibilities in the Barents region. Funding provided by

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European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to Decide, *COM(2001)370 final, 12 September 2001, available at:* http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy_transport/en/lb_en.html.

national and county financial resources and the INTERREG III B programme Baltic Sea Region.

 Promotion of cross-border rail transport, addressing gauge incompatibility through the standardisation of changeable railcar axles. A full-scale, 2-year demonstration project will commence in autumn 2004 on the Finland-Sweden border. When economically feasible, the construction of standard European track gauges (e.g. between the Polish border and Kaunas, Lithuania) could also be considered.

To increase safety levels within all modes of transport. High priority will be attributed, in particular, to maritime safety, with a view to protecting the marine environment from accidents that threaten sea and coastal ecosystems as well as the socio-economic life of populations involved. Scientific research will support such activities.

- Implementation of the Commission proposal²⁵ on accelerated phasing in of double hull oil tankers²⁶, issued following the Prestige accident²⁷. The Commission's proposal is based on three main elements: (1) a provision that heavy fuel and heavy grades of oil cannot be carried in single hull tankers when visiting EU ports, (2) an acceleration of the calendar for the phasing-out scheme for the various categories of single hull tankers and (3) a broader application of the technical inspection regime (the so-called Condition Assessment Scheme or CAS) applying to that type of vessels. Attention will be paid to other maritime safety requirements stemming from the severe ice conditions in some parts of the Baltic.
- Strengthened dialogue and co-operation with Russia, accession countries bordering the Baltic Sea and third countries, since a significant share of the threat of oil spills, which could affect European shores, originates from the transportation of heavy fuel and heavy grades of oil in sub-standard tankers flying the flag of third countries. Such polluting oils shall only be carried by double hull tankers. This is in line with the suggestions made by the Commission in its Communication mentioned above, the Conclusions of Copenhagen European Summit, the Conclusions of the Transport Council of 5–6 December 2002 and the Resolution of the European Parliament of 19 December 2002²⁸.
- Implementation of concrete initiatives such as the INTERREG project "Northern Maritime Corridor (NMC)", aimed at establishing a closer partnership between national/regional authorities (including port authorities) and with the business community (manufacturers, shippers, oil companies, etc.) to maximise the regional development effect in the north, the south and along the corridor. The Northern Maritime Corridor is essentially the western extension of the Northern Sea Route as defined and long promoted by the Russian Federation. As with the NMC, the Northern Sea Route contains strong elements of economic development, navigational and environmental safety, in particular as oil tanker traffic from Murmansk increases in the future.

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I.e. amendment of EC Regulation 417/2002

²⁶ COM (2002) 780 final of 20 December 2002

²⁷ COM (2002) 681 final of 3 December 2002

PA5 TA PROV (2002) 0629 On measures to alleviate the effects of the Prestige disaster.

Carrying out of research projects such as ARCOP (ARCtic Operational Platform)
that commenced in January 2003 under Finnish co-ordination and concerned with
maritime transport of oil in Arctic waters or SAPITS (SAfety of northern
Plpelines and associated Transport Systems) currently under consideration for
Tacis funding.

1.4. Telecommunications and Information Society

To promote the co-ordinated development of telecommunications, information society networks and services in the Northern Dimension region, including the regulatory and administrative framework. A co-ordinated effort should be made to support Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) development in Northwest Russia, to help avoid the development of a technology and infrastructure gap.

- Continued implementation of the Northern eDimension Action Plan (NeDAP) through EU programmes and public/private funding at national and regional level. In particular, implementation of co-operative activities with a clear focus on the following priority action lines:
- Infrastructure and faster Internet access;
- Skills and Internet Usage for business, citizens and government; and
- Stimulating the use of the Internet.
- Effective implementation of NeDAP activities in key sectors such as: High Speed Research Networks and advanced broadband applications, ICT Security, eSkills, eCommerce, eGovernment eIndicators and eEnvironment, needed to strengthen the Northern region's leading position in the Information Technology (IT) sector. Continued dialogue and networking, involving all relevant actors, will also be necessary in order to ensure an adequate follow-up of NeDAP, which expires in 2004.
- Improved planning by governments in the Northern Dimension region and the EU neighbouring countries for the adoption of the Information Society and promotion of new technologies by Governments, Business and Citizens.
- Promotion of policies in EU neighbouring countries designed to attract investments into the IT market and to encourage the development of a procompetitive regulatory framework in the sectors of telecommunications and electronic commerce and reduce the East-West digital divide
- Promotion and support to regional co-operation for the inter-operability of networks (including research networks) and services in the Northern Dimension region and the EU neighbouring countries, including e-commerce services and electronic signatures.
- Continued implementation of *Nordunet2*, a Nordic Council of Ministers research program on advanced Internet and Internet applications in the sectors of Research and Development.

Bearing in mind the importance of ICT in helping the Northern Dimension region to overcome the disadvantages caused by long distances and a harsh climate, Northern Dimension partners will make every effort to accelerate the transition of the region to an information society, to ensure better living conditions and access to modern services, including telemedicine and e-learning.

- Further promotion of the use of telemedicine by extending a project covering hospitals in Arkhangelsk and Tromso into other areas of Russia. At present, the project includes building a telemedicine studio in Arkhangelsk, as part of a network of 16 studios in the oblast. Initiative financed by the INTERREG programme, Norway and Russian partners.
- Continued implementation of projects on e-learning such as the Barents Virtual University, the University of the Arctic and the Baltic Sea Virtual Campus, a common systems platform for e-learning and virtual study courses, funded through the INTERREG III B programme.
- Promotion of the eBarents Action Plan to survey the possibilities of access to the Internet in remote areas, facilitate development of broadband networks crossing the borders of the Barents Region and develop a plan for wider dissemination of ICT knowledge.
- Enhanced attention to be paid by all Northern Dimension partners to make sure that plans for developing Telecommunications and Network infrastructure as well as e-business take proper account of the interests of indigenous communities and institutions.

2. Human resources, Education, Scientific Research and Public Health

2.1. Human Resources, Education and Culture

To promote the creation of a "knowledge-based region" by promoting joint projects, networking and mobility in the fields of education, research, culture and youth and by bringing learning to remote areas through Internet-based tools.

- Continued support to curriculum development, development of teaching methods and material as well as to the improvement of university management through multilateral co-operation projects involving higher education establishments from EU Member States and the Tempus Partner Countries (including the Russian Federation) as well as to the mobility of academic staff in the said countries through the Tempus III programme; continued support to multilateral projects and student mobility in the field of education and vocational training through Community instruments such as Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci which encompass EU Member States, Acceding and Candidate Countries as well as Norway and Iceland. All these programmes will run until 2006
- Continued use of the Nordic Grant Scheme of the Nordic Council of Ministers to develop long-term collaboration projects in the fields of higher education and research, and in the voluntary sector, through the NORDPLUS Neighbour initiative. The focus will be on Nordic languages, culture and society, and environmental technology. Annual funding of €1.3m from 2004-2006 will be

provided by partner countries in the Northern Dimension and the Nordic countries.

- Strengthened co-operation and networking with Russian institutions through the Barents Virtual University²⁹ and the University of the Arctic's multi-lateral structures³⁰.
- Launch and implementation of a NCM Action Plan for Education and Scientific Research co-operation with Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Northwest Russia aimed at developing a common Nordic-Baltic region for education and research and to further develop Nordic co-operation with Russian authorities and institutions.
- Strengthened development of curriculum, teaching methods and materials at Kaliningrad State University, offering a model for other Russian institutions, through the EuroFaculty-Kaliningrad Project, funded by Denmark, Germany, Norway and Sweden in the CBSS framework.
- Strengthened support to the Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth Affairs, a hub for information distribution and co-ordination for all youth issues, including the development of a regional youth identity and the encouragement of youth involvement in civil society/business. Funding provided by Sweden, Finland, German Estonia, Lithuania, Norway and Russia.
- Continued provision of information on opportunities through the Barents Youth Co-operation Office in Murmansk, co-financed by Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia in the BEAC framework.
- Enhanced mobility for students, teachers, researchers and academic personnel by applying the Swedish experience of the Visby Programme³¹ elsewhere in the Northern Dimension region.
- Promotion of co-operation through the use of e-Learning, Virtual Study facilities and cross-border joint curricula, through the Baltic Sea Virtual Campus, a common systems platform for e-learning and virtual study courses, funded through the INTERREG III B programme.

To promote a dialogue that enables them to develop the region as a dynamic and open cultural area, raising awareness of cultural heritage, including as a promoter for local and regional development.

• In the BEAC framework, preparation of joint actions by national and regional organisations, such as the Barents Regional Council's action plan for multi-lateral co-operation, which includes projects such as the Barents Portal of Cultural Networks and Gateway to Barents, a training centre for project leaders, some of which are funded through INTERREG.

29

http://www.bvuniversity.org/.

http://www.uarctic.org/.

^{31 &}lt;u>http://www.si.se/e_visby/2544.cs?dirid=11608.</u>

- Promotion of multilateral co-operation and dialogue on cultural projects around the Baltic Sea through the *Ars Baltica* network³².
- Continued use of the Nordic Council of Ministers Culture Programme for Saami cultural co-operation, for providing grants to young artists, for supporting translation of literature from a Nordic to a Baltic language and vice versa and for supporting seminars on inter-cultural co-operation.
- Strengthened regional co-operation on the basis of the report to be presented by the Baltic Sea Monitoring Group on Heritage Co-operation at the 2003 meeting of Ministers of Culture in St Petersburg, including the establishment of a Baltic Sea Forum, as a platform for effective co-ordination of activities.

2.2. Scientific Research

To improve communication and information exchange among all sectors of the scientific community in Russia (including Kaliningrad) and in the enlarged EU, encouraging at the same time the involvement of young researchers. They will improve the dissemination of information to the scientific community at large in the region and create a mechanism for stimulating co-operation between the many scientific institutes and universities in the North.

• Creation of a *Northern Dimension Research Network for Science and Technology* for the longer-term strengthening and promotion of scientific capacity and cooperation in the north, particularly in view of the enlargement process and the participation of Russia in the 6th EU Framework Programme on Research, Technological Development and Demonstration³³ (RTD).

To strengthen research and technology-development activities, particularly in sectors relating to climate change, environmental protection, sustainable management and utilisation of natural resources, safety and security of energy supplies, maritime safety, social and economic developments in the region.

- Enhanced targeted research within a largely northern European consortium will provide a scientific basis for increasing the safety of ice bound shipping. It is expected that this research will be supported within the thematic research priority 1.6.2 Sustainable Surface Transport, objective 4.11 of the in the 6th EU Framework Programme on Research, Technological Development and Demonstration (RTD) and will provide a major contribution to the establishment of a solid knowledge base for the design and maintenance of ice strengthened vessels operating within northern waters.
- Enhanced support will be provided for the integration of risk based ship design. This will focus on strategies and technologies to improve maritime safety in terms of new ship designs, operational procedures and risk-based regulations. A systematic and all-embracing approach to ship safety will lead to a strategic overview of safety and effective use of critical technologies. Important for the environment and also for the northern shipping industry. The participation of

32

http://www.ars-baltica.net/.

More information on the 6th EU Framework Programme on RTD is available at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/index en.html.

Russia and Baltic countries is possible within the financial rules of 6th EU Framework Programme on Research, Technological Development and Demonstration (RTD).

- Enhanced research activity in the High-North, building inter alia on UK research into the role of the high-latitude ocean in decadal climate variability, the sensitivity of marine eco-systems to environmental change, fluctuations in the mass of sea ice and ice sheets, and the role of boreal forests in the Earth System.
- Strengthened emphasis on the circumpolar Arctic through *International Polar Year (2007)*. Discussions are already underway in the international scientific community to define priorities and collaborative efforts. Activities of interest are related to climate change and its impacts, adaptation measures, indigenous communities, pollution pathways, new technologies, etc. In particular, Russia aims to play a strong and visible role in the IPY and is supported in this aim by the European Commission.
- Development of the knowledge required to establish a more harmonised and effective monitoring regime for illicit oil discharges through the OCEANIDES project (3-year duration) that commenced in December 2002 as a contribution to environmental protection in the entire maritime territories of Germany in the Baltic and North Seas and part of the Finnish maritime territory in the Baltic Sea. Co-ordinated by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, the project includes German, Finnish, Norwegian and British partners.
- Improved effectiveness of fisheries monitoring in the Baltic through a 3-year JRC project to commence during 2003. Providing support to the enlargement process, customers are the fisheries monitoring authorities of Latvia, Poland, Lithuania as well as Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Germany. The effort will focus on integration of monitoring technologies (remote sensing, JRC software tools and modelling activities relating to cod stocks in the Baltic Sea).
- Strengthened international networking on sustainability research, through the Virtual Research Institute for Sustainable Agriculture and the Baltic 21 Institute for Sustainable Industry.

2.3. Public Health

To address the challenges linked to the fight against major communicable diseases, and particularly tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. In addition to this, special attention will be paid to health problems in children and young people, addressing also the social and economic roots of such diseases.

- Enhanced dialogue and effective implementation of concrete activities through the Task Force on Communicable Diseases Control established in the CBSS framework, through which 150 projects have been undertaken involving regional organisations in disease surveillance, HIV and tuberculosis control, prevention of antimicrobial resistance, support to primary health care and health in prisons.
- Implementation of the BEAC 2003-2007 programme on health and related social issues, principally funded by participating countries.

- Establishment of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing and rapid implementation of concrete projects in the region to address the problems related to communicable and lifestyle-related chronic diseases. Building on a joint concerted action at international level, the Partnership will strongly emphasise the necessity of *prevention*, working to re-orient public policies and strategies as well as health and social services. The Partnership will have to integrate some existing co-operation systems and structures, with a view to maximising their overall effectiveness on a regional scale.
- Implementation of region-wide projects covering EU Member States, accessing countries, Iceland and Norway on improving information and knowledge on public health issues, enhance the capability of responding rapidly and in a coordinated way to health threats, promote health and prevent disease by addressing the health determinants.
- Enhanced exchange of information among all partners of the region on the promotion of healthier lifestyles, the role of education and training on health of children/young people. Development of high quality statistics comparable between countries through the NCM committees on health and social statistics.
- Implementation of some 400 projects between 2004-2006 through the NCM Action Plan for Children and Youth in the 3 Baltic Countries and Russia, to improve the health of children in Russia, particularly street/prison children. Funding provided by central and local authorities and partner NGOs.
- Strengthened co-operation between the 5 Nordic countries, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and North West Russia in the framework of a Partnership and Action Plan on combating use of narcotic drugs, funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

To enhance and extend international cooperation on public health issues beyond communicable diseases as such, in order to address also the social determinants of health problems, the impact of the environment on citizens' health and the structural reform of health services across the region.

- Promotion of the establishment of a Northern Dimension partnership in Public Health and Social wellbeing to support concerted and wide-ranging joint actions to overcome the serious health and social problems in the area. The partnership could reinforce wide collaboration of countries, organisations, financial institutions, business and industry, communities and civil society. It should be based on long-term sustained commitments by equal partners, with initial impetus coming from the Northern Dimension partner countries themselves.
- Through the 6th EU Framework Programme on RTD and national research programmes, promotion of research on the relationship between the environment, pollution and health, notably by monitoring human exposure to mercury, persistent organic pollutants and other chemicals.

3. Environment, Nuclear Safety and Natural Resources

3.1. Environment

To strengthen the EU-Russia dialogue on environmental issues in the framework of the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement, and work for the full respect of international conventions on environment.

- Enhanced co-operation of all partners to ensure convergence of environmental legislation, standards and norms throughout the region, including Environmental Impact Assessment.
- Improved enforcement of laws, environmental monitoring and capacity building of environmental administration at regional level in Northwest Russia.
- Enhanced commitment of all partners for the implementation of the HELCOM³⁴ Copenhagen Declaration on maritime safety and reduced pollution and the rapid ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, UN/ECE Espoo, Aarhus and Stockholm Conventions. Cooperation on Kyoto Protocol implementation, in particular via Joint Implementation projects and via the EU initiative on the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES)³⁵, identified as a joint EU-Russia field of cooperation in the space sector³⁶.

To monitor and tackle pollutants throughout the region, principally chemicals, POPs, heavy metals, toxic and urban waste, in order to reduce their impact on the Barents and Baltic Seas, on inland waters and on the Arctic. Particular attention will also be paid to the problem of air pollution and to the promotion of cleaner production systems.

- Enforcement or development of national legislation ensuring convergence with European regulations or directives on (inter alia) chemicals, toxic and urban waste, water and sea pollution, safety of oil transport by sea.
- Enhanced attention to the monitoring of pollutants in the region, on the basis of reports and researches carried out by the European Environment Agency, the Arctic Council, HELCOM and Baltic 21³⁷. Of particular relevance in this framework:

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The Helsinki Commission, or HELCOM, works to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution through intergovernmental co-operation between Denmark, Estonia, the European Community, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden. HELCOM is the governing body of the "Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area" - more usually known as the 1992 Helsinki Convention, entered into force on 17 January 2000. More information available at: http://www.helcom.fi/.

³⁵ *COM(2001)609 final*

A joint statement was signed in 2001 between the European Commission, the European Space Agency and the Russian Aviation and Space Agency under the EU-Russia Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA).

More information on Baltic 21, the CBSS initiative aimed at developing and implementing a regional Agenda 21 in the Baltic Sea Region is available at: http://www.ee/baltic21/.

- AMAP³⁸ monitoring of persistent organic pollutants in the Arctic, studying their effect on Arctic species and integrate information on the effects on health.
- PAME³⁹ Working Group strategic plan to be developed over next 2 years, led by Iceland and Canada.
- Update of the NEFCO/AMAP report on priority environmental hot spot in the Russian part of the Barents region, to be presented by NEFCO in August 2003.
- Continued implementation of projects financed in the framework of EU programmes such as Tacis, LIFE and INTERREG. Among others:
- Tacis €24 M contribution to the construction of a South West Wastewater Treatment Plant in St Petersburg. Support to similar activities in Kaliningrad.
- Improve Water Quality Management in coastal zones through INTERREG project due for completion by 2005.
- Integrate coastal zone development through "BaltCoast" INTERREG project, due for completion in 2005.
- Implementation of the Baltic Sea Joint Comprehensive Environmental Action Programme (JCP), aimed at reducing pollution in the Baltic Sea catchment area in order to restore the ecological balance of the Baltic Sea. Participants: HELCOM Contracting Parties, other countries in the catchment area, NGOs and IFIs. Individual Hot Spot owners in co-operation with local, regional, national programmes and international donors and financing institutions finance the activities encompassed by the programme.
- Implementation of projects in the framework of the 2001-2004 Nordic Environmental Action Plan of the Nordic Council of Ministers Projects, including inter alia:
- Nordic-Baltic co-operation on chemicals: EU Accession Support Workshop Programme on actual Chemicals Control Issues, in the framework of the Baltic countries Regional Projects on Chemicals Control (BACCON).
- Air Quality Assessment in the Baltic Countries, as a Consequence of Local Pollution and Long Range Transport – a Co-operation between Nordic and Baltic Countries within the Framework of EMEP's 20 Years Assessment⁴⁰.
- Implementation of the Arctic Council Action Plan to Eliminate Pollution in the Arctic⁴¹, established by the Arctic States, entailing several projects including on

EMEP: Co-operative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollutants in Europe

32

Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme, a working group of the Arctic Council (http://www.amap.no/).

Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment, a working group of the Arctic Council (http://www.pame.is/).

More information on the Arctic Council Action Plan To Eliminate Pollution of the Arctic (ACAP) is available at: http://www.arctic-council.org/activities.html#acap.

cleaner production, and control/elimination of PCBs, obsolete pesticides and dioxins.

To make full use of multilateral funding mechanisms, such as the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership and the Nordic Environmental Development Fund.

- Continued effective implementation of the projects included in the "Environmental Window" of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership Support Fund. Strengthened dialogue and co-operation among the International Financial Institutions operating in the region, and especially NIB, EBRD, EIB and NEFCO.
- Implementation of environmental projects in the framework of the Nordic Environmental Development Fund (NMF) established by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 1995 and managed by NEFCO. The fund has a total capital of approximately € 40 million. The annual contribution to the fund amounts to around € 5 million. The fund is intended to complement and supplement other financing organisations, particularly IFIs and bilateral sources. Local participation in the financing is required.

3.2. Nuclear Safety

To implement the projects included in the Nuclear Window of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership Support Fund without delay, following the signature of the agreement establishing a Multilateral Nuclear Environmental Programme in the Russian Federation (MNEPR). Priority will be given to the management of spent nuclear fuel and nuclear waste, decommissioning of nuclear facilities and nuclear powered submarines.

- Conclusion and implementation of the MNEPR agreement, which provides for the necessary legal framework for carrying out multilateral and bilateral nuclear-related projects in the Russian Federation.
- Effective and rapid implementation of the first projects encompassed by the Nuclear Window of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership Support Fund, including⁴²:
- Infrastructure at Andreeva Bay;
- Spent nuclear fuel management at Andreeva Bay;
- Building 5 at Andreeva Bay;
- Radioactive waste management at Andreeva Bay;
- The Lepse;

Interim storage facility for spent nuclear fuel;

More information on the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership, including details on the projects mentioned in the text is available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external relations/north dim/ndep/infomemo.pdf.

- Interim storage facility for radioactive waste;
- Repository for short and intermediate level short-lived radioactive waste (at Novaya Zemlya);
- Continued implementation of bilateral (mainly Norwegian-Russian) projects to support the dismantling of Russian submarines and infrastructure development for clean up at Andreeva Bay.
- Continued implementation of the programme for the decommissioning of the Ignalina (Lithuania) nuclear power plant.

To strengthen monitoring and the protection of environment from radiation through increased co-operation, including improved co-ordination of national plans for dealing with nuclear safety incidents in the region.

- Strengthened networking and exchange of information between the members of the CBSS on radiation monitoring data, on the basis of the Agreement signed at the CBSS Ministerial meeting held in Hamburg on 7 June 2001Continued implementation of such agreement through the CBSS Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety, including common communication exercises with the CBSS countries and CEC as participants.
- Strengthened national emergency plans, with priority given to preparedness of coherent and integrated international actions within the region and increased civilian co-operation with Russia to improve safety and safeguarding of nuclear installations and waste sites.
- Enhanced role of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Arctic Council in monitoring the radiation levels in the Arctic region and providing scientific advice to decision-makers on the initiatives to be taken to combat effectively these problems.

3.3. Natural Resources

To help ensure that Nordic and Arctic eco-systems and their bio-diversity shall remain viable, vigorous and able to sustain human socio-economic needs, and to encourage the responsible and sustainable utilisation of forests and fish stocks, with the active participation of local actors, communities, SMEs and indigenous peoples in the decision-making process.

- Implementation of projects within the framework of the Nordic Environment Programme for Agriculture and Forestry of the Nordic Council of Ministers, including:
- Methanoxidation as integrated environment indicator;
- Status for environmental regulations of Agriculture in the Baltic Sea Region;
- Traditional Rural Biotopes and Landscapes- Management in the Nordic and Baltic Countries.

- Implementation of projects in the Nordic Forest Research Co-operation Committee (SNS) of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Such activities include, among others:
- Technology and the Nordic Forest Sector (a pilot study for 2003);
- Nordic IUFRO thinning experiments in Norway spruce (2003-2005);
- The potential of Larch wood for exterior use (2003-2005);
- Structural timber quality in Norway spruce: Genetic variation and rapid measurement technique (2003-2005).
- Ensured follow up on the EU initiative on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) in the Northern Dimension area.
- Continued development of the NOVA-BOVA University, a Nordic Council of Ministers platform for Nordic co-operation and for exploring new ways to forge a networking university without boundaries) NOVA University The Nordic forestry, Veterinary and Agricultural University is a platform for efficient and innovative Nordic co-operation, exploring new ways to forge a networking university without boundaries. The BOVA University includes NOVA and the Baltic countries. The aims of BOVA is the same as for NOVA. The BOVA secretariat is placed in Lithuania.
- Enhanced promotion of the role of regional/local administrations, SMEs, NGOs and organisations of indigenous peoples in the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

4. Cross-Border Co-Operation

To implement cross-border co-operation initiatives principally on priority themes such as economic and social development, environmental protection, transport and telecommunication, border crossings and border management, public health, and cultural exchanges.

- Enhanced co-operation in the framework of the present INTERREG III programmes on the Northern Dimension Area, including the participation of the Russian partners.
- Support provided to the new INTERREG programmes to be set up in the area after 2004, especially those covering the new external border of the EU. Use as an example the existing well functioning structures on the external border. These INTERREG programmes more fully into the implementation of the Northern Dimension as well on the policy level as on the project level.
- Continued EU financial support for border crossings on the external borders of the EU on the Northern Dimension area with a view of facilitating legal movements of goods and people and prevention of illegal migration and smuggling.
- Continued efforts to develop within these programmes joint projects with a genuine cross border or regional character, such as:

- "The Gulf of Finland Growth Triangle" introduces a new concept of regional and economic co-operation. The aim of the concept is to promote public-private co-operation, trade and economic development between Southern Finland, Estonia and the St. Petersburg Area, i.e. across current and future external EU borders.
- "Baltic +": Southern Baltic Sea with participation of regions from Sweden, Germany, Poland (duration until 2005).
- "Via Baltica Nordica Development Zone": Northern & Eastern Baltic Sea involving regions from Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and the Kaliningrad Oblast (duration until 2005).
- "SEAGULL DevERB": South-Eastern Baltic Sea, a project related to Euroregion Baltic: local and regional authorities from Sweden, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Kaliningrad (duration until 2005).
- "Baltic Palette II": Central & Eastern Baltic Sea with regions from Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, as well as the Leningrad Oblast and St Petersburg (duration until 2004).
- South Baltic Arc": Southern Baltic Sea coast participation of regions from Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and the Kaliningrad Oblast (duration until 2004).
- "STRING II": South-Western Baltic Sea involving regions from Germany, Denmark, Sweden (duration until 2004).
- "Metropolitan Areas (MA+)": Strengthening competitiveness of metropolitan areas including regions and municipalities from Germany, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Lithuania, Poland as well as St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Oblast (duration until 2005).
- "Rural Development Connection": Stimulate development in rural areas with the participation of regions and municipalities from Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (duration until 2005).
- "The PIPE project": Attracting and involving youth for development in rural areas with regions from Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania plus the region of Murmansk (duration until 2004).
- BALTCOAST especially its part (subproject) "The Vistula Lagoon / Baltijsk Spit -common vision and ways of harmonisation different demands". The Project aims at demonstrating practical ways how to simultaneously promote development and protection. The Project is led by Ministry of Labour and Construction of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany) and covers the coastal, as well as offshore, areas all over the Baltic Sea (especially in Denmark, Germany, Finland, Poland, Sweden, Latvia, and Estonia).

To strengthen co-ordination among funding programmes operated by the European Union and by other sources, including international financial institutions and the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Russian Federation shall be involved in the co-financing of activities as much as possible. The European Commission will make every effort to improve the co-ordination of EU programmes, and particularly Tacis and INTERREG.

- Strengthened co-ordination between national, international and EU financing of cross border and regional activities on the Northern Dimension Area.
- Continued efforts for the further consolidation of co-ordination between relevant EU instruments which promote cross border and regional co-operation on the Northern Dimension area including the possibility of creating a new Neighbourhood Instrument which builds on the positive experiences of promoting cross-border co-operation within the Phare, Tacis and INTERREG programmes.

To further stimulate the close involvement of local actors, communities and administrations in the whole process in order to strengthen subsidiarity and local ownership of projects. Better results will be achieved by building on existing examples of tri-partite co-operation and by using the expertise of regional and sub-regional bodies such as the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation, the Union of Baltic Cities, the Barents Regional Council.

• Continued co-operation in the framework of the regional and sub-regional bodies to develop the local and regional administration in the neighbouring Northwest regions of Russia. In this context the possibilities offered by the Institution Building Partnership Programme (IBBP), which is funded under the Tacis Programme and aims at encouraging the submission of projects proposals by NGOs, Non Profit Organisations and local/regional authorities should be fully exploited as well as the different twinning programmes. The new INTERREG programme "Interact" could play a key role in this.

To address the key challenges faced by the Kaliningrad region in its future development as an exclave surrounded by the European Union. The EU, the Russian Federation and other partners will work on the implementation of cross-border projects dealing with economic and social development, environmental issues, health issues, the fight against organised crime as well as adequate infrastructure on the border crossings and efficient border management.

- Development and effective implementation of the trilateral Poland-Lithuania-Russia INTERREG III A programme on the Kaliningrad region to be set up in 2004 in order to ensure the full commitment of the Kaliningrad regional and local authorities to this programme.
- Cross border co-operation on this area to be promoted inter alia through:
- A joint regional development plan for the whole area on the basis of the INTERREG III A programme.
- Enhanced co-operation in the framework of the Lithuanian- Russian "Nida" initiative and the trilateral (Lithuania, Russia, Poland) INTERREG programme.
- Provision of adequate Tacis funding to the projects related to this trilateral INTERREG programme through the Special Package for Kaliningrad.
- Continued financial support for the border crossings between Kaliningrad and Poland and Lithuania

5. JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

5.1. Prevention and fight against organised crime

To improve the co-ordination among national administrations and police forces in order to optimise the use of resources, develop concrete operational measures between the EU and Russia, and increase the effectiveness of law enforcement co-operation.

- Rapid and effective implementation of EU-Russia Action Plan against organised crime. Use of the Community Programme AGIS⁴³ to help legal practitioners, law enforcement officials and representatives of victim assistance services from the EU Member States and accession countries to set-up Europe-wide networks, exchange information and best practices in the field of cooperation in criminal matters.
- Implementation of the Tacis 1 M€ project on organised crime in Kaliningrad, which will promote multi-disciplinary cooperation in the region.
- Strengthened co-operation between the Council of the Baltic Sea States Task Force on Organised Crime in the Baltic Sea and other multilateral fora, in order to avoid duplication and improve the overall effectiveness of the actions in the region.
- Continued dialogue and networking between Nordic Council and Baltic States in the framework of Nordic-Baltic Co-operation, focusing in particular on legislation shaping, co-operation between the supreme courts and training in this area, fight against trans-national organised crime (including fight against terrorism and cyber crime, bio terrorism and money laundering), co-operation between prisons (NORD-BALT follow-up) and trafficking in human beings. The ministers will meet regularly. A Nordic-Baltic Contact group with representatives from the Ministries of Justice plans and co-ordinates the 5+3 meetings and are responsible for the various implementation of actions decided by the ministers. Such actions involve seminars, conferences and networks. The Nordic Council of Ministers has also financed a co-operation between prison administrations in northern Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia.
- Continued support for police forces in the Baltic States, Kaliningrad and St Petersburg (e.g. through training, transfer of knowledge, combat of organised crime and trafficking) from the Ministries of the Interior of Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.
- Continued co-operation between the penitentiary authorities in Archangelsk and Schleswig-Holstein on e.g. modernising the penitentiary, training of personnel, transfer of knowledge and expertise, material support.

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More information on the EU AGIS Programme is available at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/funding/agis/funding_agis_en.htm.

To address as a priority trafficking in human beings and drugs and tackle crime targeting children and women.

- Exploration of the possibilities offered by the Community Programme Daphne⁴⁴ to implement activities in the field of the fight against violence on women.
- Implementation of the 1 M€ Tacis Trafficking in Women project in Russia.
- Prioritisation of co-operative work on reducing the risk to children's safety from emerging technologies, on the basis, inter alia, of the proposals elaborated by the Council of the Baltic Sea States Working Group for Co-operation on Children at Risk.
- Implementation of anti-trafficking public and media campaign in Murmansk oblast, including seminars and training, through SIDA⁴⁵ funding.
- Strengthened dialogue and development of appropriate measures in the context of the Nord-Baltic Co-operation between Nordic Council and Baltic countries.
- Implementation of Nordic-Baltic Contact group seminars, conferences and networks. The Nordic Council of Ministers has also financed co-operation between prison administrations in northern Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia.
- Delivery of co-operation programme against prostitution and trafficking in women, under the Swedish chairmanship of the Nordic Council of Ministers, planned for 2003-2004. A survey of the situation concerning prostitution and trafficking in women and of existing initiatives in the Region will be followed by projects aimed at strengthening the situation of victims and potential victims and at discouraging the demand for sexual services from women and children.

5.2. Integrated border management

To combat illegal immigration and other cross-border crime through improved and integrated border management.

- Strengthened regional co-operation on issues such as the return of illegal migrants between the participating countries, implementation of the migration and asylum policy, detention of illegal migrants, first contact standards for asylum seekers, issues related to the implementation of an EU-Russia readmission agreement when signed.
- Implementation of Polish modernisation of its border crossings in 2003-2005, with a view to prevention of illegal migration and smuggling of goods, as well as shortened waiting times. Along border with Kaliningrad, Poland to start construction of Grzechotki-Mamonovo II border crossing and modernisation of Gołdap-Gusev crossing.

45

More information on the EU Daphne Programme is available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/funding/daphne/funding_daphne_en.htm.

Swedish International Development Agency

- Implementation of the Tacis projects on modernisation of the border crossing points in Kibarti Chernyshevsky (8 M€) and Bezledy Bagrationovsk (3 M€).
- Implementation of bilateral pilot projects aimed at reducing number of authorities directly present at the border, launched in the Barents Region, jointly financed on a cost-sharing basis by participating states, in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council framework.
- Implementation of proposal for Polish Border Guards to invite Russian partners to study experience of German-Polish border and consider the possibility of using parts of this experience at their border.
- Promotion of the measures exemplified by the trilateral border management cooperation structures between Finland, Estonia and Russia and between Finland, Norway and Russia.

5.3. Civil Protection

To improve and encourage the convergence of safety procedures, promoting at the same time civil protection, good governance and direct public participation in project planning.

- Continued effective implementation of the EUROBALTIC Programme (INTERREG IIIB) for Civil Protection, aimed at improving the regional capacity to protect human life, the environment and cultural heritage.
- Implementation of Barents Euro-Arctic Council-promoted Barents Rescue 2001 follow-up project to prevent and limit consequences of accidents in the Barents Region, to clarify and simplify applicable legal/administrative frameworks, to develop a map of present emergency and rescue resources in the Region and establish a list of regional contact points, to compile clear and simple instruction manuals in all relevant languages for request/provision of rescue assistance and to develop and deepen contacts between actors with emergency and rescue responsibilities. Project to last from January 2003-December 2005. Total budget €689,636, funded from INTERREG III A programme Kolarctic with co-financing from Finland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden (€589,636). Additionally, €100,000 applied for from INTERREG III B programme Baltic Sea Region within the Barents Regional Council's umbrella project "Barents 2010".
- In the EUROBALTIC framework, enhanced co-operation among emergency and rescue services to improve regional capacity to prevent and respond to natural and man-made disasters, support for institution and human capacity building and promotion of the transfer of expertise on information technology and decisionmaking support systems.
- Active support for joint projects in the frame of the existing bilateral co-operation agreement between Kaliningrad and the Schleswig-Holstein State Parliament (Landtag), including seminars and traineeships for civil servants and parliamentarians on e.g. legislation, political, public or civil society.

ANNEX 2

List of abbreviations

AC Arctic Council

AGIS Community Framework Programme for the co-operation in

criminal matters and the fight against crime

AMAP Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme

BAC Business Advisory Council

BALTREL Baltic Ring Electricity Co-operation Committee

BASREC Baltic Sea Region Energy Co-operation

BCCA Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association

BEAC Barents Euro-Arctic Council

BEATA Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area

BSCC Baltic Sea Customs Conference

BSR-BCCC Baltic Sea Region Border Control Conference

CBSS Council of the Baltic Sea States

CEES EU/Russia Common European Economic Space initiative

Daphne Community Programme to combat violence against children,

young people and women

EBRD European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

EIB European Investment Bank

EMEPCo-operative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-Range

Transboundary Air Pollutants in Europe

EU European Union

FLEGT Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade

FP Framework Programme

HELCOM Helsinki Commission

IBBP Institution Building Partnership Programme

ICT Information and Communication Technology

IFIs International Financial Institutions

INTERREG Community programme aiming to stimulate inter-regional

cooperation within the EU

IPY International Polar Year

IT Information Technology

JHA Justice and Home Affairs

JRC Joint Research Centre

LIFE EU Financial Instrument for the Environment

MNEPR Multilateral Nuclear Environmental Programme in the Russian

Federation

NCM Nordic Council of Ministers

ND Northern Dimension

NDEP Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership

NDF Northern Development Fund

NeDAP Northern eDimension Action Plan

NEFCO Nordic Environment Finance Corporation

NGOs Non-Governmental Organisations

NIB Nordic Investment Bank

NMC Northern Maritime Corridor

NMF Nordic Environmental Development Fund

Nopef Nordic Project Fund

PAME Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Programme

PCA Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

Phare Community assistance programme for the Central European

candidate countries

POPs Persistent Organic Pollutants

RTD Research, Technological Development and Demonstration

SIDA Swedish International Development Agency

SMEs Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

SNS Nordic Forest Research Co-operation Committee

Tacis Community Technical Assistance programme for the

Commonwealth of Independent States

TEN-E Trans-European Energy Network

TEN-T Trans-European Transport Network

UN/ECE United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

WTO World Trade Organisation