

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

- 1/ Mr Jan P. Syse, President of the Nordic Council
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- 3/ Mr Vitaly Shipov, Union of the Russian Cities
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II General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities, Svetlogorsk 24-25 September
1993

Key Note Address

by Mr Jan JP. Svse, President of the Nordic Council,
former Prime Minister of Norway

Mr President, dear colleagues and distinguished guests,

Two years ago the constitutional conference of the Union of Baltic Cities was held in Gdansk. The Nordic Council was then, like is today, strongly in support of the establishment of co-operation on many levels and between different groups of the Baltic Sea region.

These two years have brought many political changes to the Region, Political democracy is becoming a reality among all states on the Eastern rim of the Baltic Sea. My parliamentary colleagues in these countries have tackled many a problem in building a democratic society of a post-communist state. Their work has been admirable. A democracy can be seen as built upon two pillars - each and everyone of them necessary for creating a Modern Democratic Society. A constitution, free and lawful elections, a multi-party system, the separation of powers, governmental decentralisation, freedom of the press, freedom of the individual, human rights, legal protection for the minorities and the rule of the law,

Independence and freedom are for each nation a precondition for being a sovereign state. The proud Baltic peoples know this better than most. The national laws also need to take into account the common principles of minority and human rights which are equally important elements of democracy. This work requires determination and great political efforts.

The Nordic Council has given high priority to co-operation with its border regions of the Baltic states and the co-operation in the Baltic Sea region. Other new and exciting regionalized political co-operations are being established in the Nordic neighbourhood. The opening up of the Euro-Arctic or the Barents region and the Arctic region are both aiming at common goals and guidelines for the fragile Arctic environment. The North Western regions of Russia are through this co-operation also becoming more known to the Nordic Council.

Mr Chairman,

The development of stable democracies in the Baltic Sea region is a prerequisite for a positive development built on co-operation. This co-operation should not at least be used to re-build a healthy environment.

Generals are often accused of fighting the last war, or even the one before, rather, than the next one. Politicians are just as prone to it. But now we have to fight a war that has never been fought before. Let us not make any mistake, so we shall not repeat old mistakes. Let us get our priorities right.

In working for the environment we are working for the well being of our citizens around the Baltic Sea. The restoration of the clean marine environment of the Baltic Sea will require substantial resources. Our resources are not sufficient and comprehensive international financing will be needed. The Nordic Council - through the Nordic Investment Bank and the Nordic Environmental Financing Company - are trying to contribute to financing of some environmental projects aimed at restoring the ecological balance in the Baltic Sea.

These actions are not sufficient to reduce the massive pollution in the Baltic Sea. There is an urgent need for the people along the Seaside to become aware of the state of health of our Sea and start to act.

The environmental co-operation among the Baltic states will be a test of Europe's ability to reverse the negative trends. To come to grips with the destructive emissions to air and water, new principles must be adopted. Equal reductions in each country is the old concept. It needs to be supplemented by others. Our focus must be on the sources that pollute the most. Where they are located is less important. Today cost-effectiveness must be the guiding light.

It is urgent to gather all political and economical leaders to agree on a common environmental strategy for the Baltic Sea.

The Baltic Interparliamentary Assembly, like the Union of Baltic Cities, was established two years ago, can be the organisation to discuss these questions. It is our wish that contact with the Nordic Council will support and strengthen the Baltic co-operation in its work.

The Nordic Council has established and will continue to have close working relations with the Baltic Assembly. The Nordic Council will continue its parliamentary training programme. A second group of newly elected members of the Baltic parliaments along with Polish and Russian colleagues, including Kaliningrad, will by the end of this year be granted scholarships to the Nordic countries in order to promote the parliamentary co-operation. Thus we will enhance the mutual knowledge of parliamentary institutions and develop parliamentary democracy.

The parliamentary co-operation of the Baltic Assembly will be complete only when it has a counterpart and an executive body. It is a privilege for the Nordic Council to welcome a decision adopted by the governments of the Baltic states to have ministers with special responsibility for relations with Baltic and Northern European Affairs.

These Ministers have already been appointed in Latvia and Lithuania.

The Baltic Sea region has established its joint parliamentary forum. Two parliamentary conferences have been held and the third conference will be held later this year in Warsaw.

The ministerial level contacts have been maintained by the Council of Baltic Sea States but unfortunately there are few contacts and efforts to co-ordinate the activities. It is only with co-ordinated efforts that we can avoid overlapping of activities and optimize our Nordic resources.

The strength of Nordic co-operation does not depend alone on a network of the formal co-operation. The Nordic contacts comprises of a broad co-operation on all levels from grass-roots to cities, universities, media, business-companies as well as governments and parliaments. The plans of all these networks are ambitious to involve the entire Baltic Sea Region.

There is no doubt that both informal and formal networks are needed in order to create the popular support and legitimacy of the Baltic Sea co-operation.

Mr Chairman,

After only two years of co-operation around the Baltic Sea the tide is now turning. The Baltic Sea has become less of a barrier and more of a bridge for contacts following the increasing political stability and security in the region.

All these big steps of development bring the Baltic and Nordic co-operation partners close to concrete co-operation. These make a good platform for the continuation of our work!

By forwarding the warmest regards from the Nordic Council I wish to express my best wishes to the General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities for the work of this second conference.

Thank you for your attention!

II General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities

Svetlogorsk, 24-25 September 1993

John Morgan, Vice-President of Council of Europe's Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE)

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I am delighted to be here in Kaliningrad this morning, as a Vice-President of the Council of Europe's Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe (CLRAE).

I am doubly pleased - because I had the privilege of representing the Council of Europe's Standing Conference at your first Conference of the Union of Baltic Cities, held nearly two years ago in Gdansk. Two years have elapsed since that Conference and the world moves on - for you in the Baltic area and for us in the Council of Europe. I doubt whether, since the Second World War, so much has happened in the space of any given two years for people like ourselves, local representatives, involved in international co-operation.

The Council of Europe and the Standing Conference have, since Gdansk, five additional member countries and they include some of those in the Baltic region - Estonia and Lithuania. Others, no doubt, will shortly follow, including Latvia. New members means new responsibilities for the CLRAE, which we have tried to shoulder in a manner to which I shall refer in a moment. Meanwhile, a few words about the CLRAE.

In the Council of Europe, the Standing Conference is the guarantor and custodian of local democracy. It responds to this role through bringing together regularly representatives of the local and regional tiers of government from the now 31 member countries to discuss and if possible achieve consensus, on matters of importance for this level of authority and above all to issue a clear, constant and unambiguous call for the reinforcement and ; defence of local and regional democracy and self-government, whenever it is threatened, from whatever source.

In order to increase its capacity to meet these responsibilities, the Heads of State and Government of the current 31 member I countries of the Council of Europe will be meeting in October in Vienna to discuss, amongst others matters, the reinforcement and the strengthening of the Standing Conference and giving it, through the creation of two Chambers - one for local authorities and one for regional authorities -

more flexibility and more possibilities of achieving genuine and fruitful co-operation between the levels of territorial authority in our member countries.

The Union of Baltic Cities has very much, in its geographical area, the same objectives as CLRAE - bringing together like-minded people to face and, if possible, find solutions to common problems. Barely a month ago, the Standing Conference was closely involved with the Baltic Sea Conference, held in Helsinki at the invitation of the Association of Finnish Municipalities. Participants, including Mayors from the Baltic area called for increased co-operation of an ever-increasing array of questions -environmental, town and country planning, land use policy and, particularly economic development. The Kaliningrad Conference is a further step in the same direction.

A further example of our close co-operation in this part of the world will be shown in the near future when we shall appoint an observer delegation to the municipal elections to be held in Estonia on 17th October - a practice to which the Standing Conference has become accustomed, through similar missions since the wind of change four years ago in Central and Eastern European countries. I personally have been present at 5 such elections and am full of praise for the way they have been conducted.

How have we in the Standing Conference responded to these movements in Central and Eastern Europe?

We have directed our approach along unsurprising but certainly necessary lines:

1. help with the establishment of local administration, local management techniques, training of officials and newly-elected politicians.
2. advice on new legislation paving the way for municipal elections and providing teams of observers to such elections.
3. encouraging the creation of national associations of municipal and regional authorities.
4. help and advice, where requested, on mechanisms for local-finance, independent sources of revenue-raising, the position; of municipalities in respect of raising loans on the money, market.

However, such assistance, of a predominantly technical nature, should not be permitted to disguise perhaps our most significant! contribution to co-operation between European towns and regions. |

Many of you here will have heard of the European Charter of local Self-Government.. I personally sent President Gorbachev a copy in July 1989, having heard him speak in Strasbourg.

It must be admitted that this Charter, defining the dimension and mechanism for local self-government and financial autonomy and identifying the distribution of responsibility between different levels of territorial authority, was relatively unknown until, recently, when, in the wake of dramatic changes in Central and; Eastern Europe, it became the basis, in many countries, for newly established local legislation.

The Charter has become a precise response to a contemporary political reality. What is this reality in Europe for local and regional politicians? It is a Europe characterised by decentralisation, and a driving momentum towards what is generally called the "Europe of Regions"; the assertion of cultural identity at a local level, but not in the distorted and deranged way as in the tragedy of the former Yugoslavia. It is an increased insistence upon local self autonomy, it is also the incorporation of notions such as subsidiarity into international and national legislation and politics - in other words, leaving to a so-called higher authority only those responsibilities which cannot be adequately assumed at a so-called lower level. Bringing the Government that most affects their daily lives nearer the people.

Our own recent work goes very much in the same direction; our European Charter on Minority and regional Languages which defines the conditions for protection of linguistic identity; a Convention on voting for foreigners in municipal elections - certainly a subject of high visibility in some of our new member countries in this part of the world. Another example of major texts which affects the sort of question which affects all of us in our municipalities is the Urban Charter where we have brought together a series of basic principles and guidelines of use, we believe, to local leaders in creating an agreeable urban environment. The world gets smaller. We all now live in a multi cultural society. It is the job of Local Government to bring harmony to the people we serve. Enriching their daily lives.

Such political realities also give a new dimension to the CLRAE, as a possible forum and arbiter, bringing together local leaders to help achieve peaceable coexistence where governments and other international organisations seem bogged down. After all, many current conflicts in Europe are fuelled by intolerance and hatred at a local level; it follows that the harnessing of local forces for peace might achieve something.

We have tried in such a manner to contribute to a resolution of the conflict in former Yugoslavia, although I have few illusions in this respect.

The tragedy in Bosnia has had a dramatic and traumatic effect on European civic leaders and indeed jeopardise the values which, over the years, the Standing Conference and other similar institutions, have espoused. Still, I believe that we must continue to try to bring people together in even the most difficult political and ethnic arenas and I have been personally involved in the former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia and elsewhere in the Balkan peninsula in such initiatives at a local level. Where such countries cannot obviously become members of the Council of Europe, in that their democratic credentials are clearly not in order, some can at least have observer status with us - in other words, the opening and the pursuit of a dialogue.

Ladies and Gentlemen, before I leave the question of local democracy and move on to another key principle behind the work of the Standing Conference - and as we are in Russia - I should like to touch, albeit briefly, on the question of local democracy in the Federation of Russia.

As an institution wedded to the principles of local autonomy, within a wider territorial responsibility, we are obviously not indifferent to the processes of reform, devolution of power and decentralisation taking place in Russia - particularly as Russia has applied to become a member of the Council of Europe. We are monitoring as closely as we can steps in this direction and are keen to help with the sort of reform suggested by the Union of Russian Cities, a body which now has observer status with the Standing Conference and with which we are organising early in November in the Caucasus a Conference on Local Democracy in Russian Cities.

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would speak on another key principle governing the work of the Standing Conference - that of co-operation.

The Kaliningrad Conference embodies one of the main objectives of the CLRAE: the need for co-operation - in this case co-operation between municipalities and regions, to seek a joint answer to common problems. This Baltic initiative echoes examples in other parts of Europe of co-operation between regions and between cities, some networks being organised directly by the CLRAE, such as co-operation in the Mediterranean region and our gradual involvement in co-operation between local authorities in the Carpathian area; other examples being organised outside the immediate responsibility of the CLRAE are the MedCities programme supported by the EEC, co-operation in the Black Sea area, Eurocities ect.

We in Britain are encouraging links between Ports and Ports around the Baltic Sea and there is finance available for such links through the United Kingdoms Know How Fund.

Local Democracy and co-operation - these are the cornerstones of our work in the Standing Conference. Above all, we are in an institution which stands for the dignity and freedom of the individual within a wider collective community. The Union « Baltic Cities and the Standing Conference have the same aims, and throughout all your work, I would urge you to keep in mind what, for us, is our central belief - the primacy of the individual/ participation and involvement and the strengthening of the politics and social rights of citizens in their town and villages throughout Europe.

Ladies and Gentlemen thank you very much for your attention and I wish you well in your work this week in Kaliningrad.

Second General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities, Svetlogorsk,
24-25 September 1993

Vassili Rodionov

The Baltic Sea Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission)

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am most honoured and pleased to have the opportunity to address the Second General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities on behalf of the Helsinki Commission and to convey warm regards from the HELCOM Chairman, Commander Fleming Otzen, and the Executive Secretary, Mr. Ulf Ehlin.

A lot of activities are going on now round the Baltic in order to inspire the new forms of collaboration and interaction adequate to renovated political climate in Europe and to ensure its constructive impact in the improvement of the human environment.

We are now witnessing the creation of a new model of regional interstate activity founded as the Union of the Baltic Cities. Succeeding the traditions of the historical urban alliance of Hansa, the Union performs as a substantial contributor to the process of positive democratic and economic development for the benefit of people living by the Baltic Sea and for the entire region.

Historically, the Baltic Sea fed people physically and emotionally and connected the nations rather than separated them.

The Baltic nations and their welfare have been traditionally conditioned, to a large extent, by the welfare of the Sea.

The Baltic Sea and its ecosystem are really unique despite an extremely unfavourable fortune granted by the Nature. The key to that is a very slow water exchange accompanied by continuous accumulation of pollutants incoming from the drainage basin which is about four times the water area. Huge amounts of pollutants are introduced to the Sea with the atmospheric deposition. Hundreds of thousands of tonnes of oxygen-consuming organic matter lead to anoxic conditions in the bottom layers rendering vast zones virtually lifeless. The size of these zones varies but in some years as much as 100 000 sq.km, or one fourth of the whole Baltic Sea, approaches to "dead bottom" conditions.

Heavy metals and bio accumulating toxic substances reach the Sea in substantial amounts and seriously affect its living resources being introduced into the food-chain.

The cooperation of the riparian States in the protection of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea will celebrate its 20 years in 1994.

The signing of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki Convention) in 1974 was a remarkable event in international ecopolitics. Taking into account the prevailing political situation at that time, the environmental protection was thus one of the first areas in which all the Baltic Sea States showed any willingness to cooperate. The Convention was also the first international instrument, which included all sources of pollution[^] in respect of a given sea area and made them subject of regulations. However, it took six long years before the Convention has been ratified by all Baltic States and entered into force in 1980.

In 1992 the Convention was revised to reflect the progress achieved since 1974 as well as the political changes in Europe during the recent years. The new Convention contains principle new provisions, i.a. the extension of the Convention area to the internal waters, application of the Precautionary Principle and the concepts of BEP and BAT, introduction of the Polluter-Pays-Principle, environmental impact assessment, nature conservation and bio diversity as well as availability of the information to the public. As soon as ratified by all Baltic Sea States the new Convention will supersede the Convention 1974.

It's hardly possible to describe in a short presentation the programmes and projects implemented within HELCOM during the past years, and, therefore, just let me point out that the life-story of the Commission was not easy at all as it has been creating a system of interstate scientific, technological and administrative cooperation in the region. The functioning of this rather effective regional system of environmental monitoring and elaboration of pollution reduction measures is one of the major achievements of the Commission. The effectiveness of the Commission's endeavours might be debated but its strong scientific-technological potential is a reality.

Since 1980 the Commission developed and adopted more than hundred technical recommendations to the Governments with regard to measures to reduce pollution of the marine environment based on the concepts of "Best Available Technology" and "Best Environmental Practice". It means that the implementation of the recommended measures falls entirely under responsibility of national authorities and, in practice, depends on their good will and availability of necessary financial and technical resources.

The Ministerial Declaration 1988 brought meaningful decisions.

In this document the Ministers of the Environment declared their firm determination to reduce substantially the inputs of heavy metals, toxic or persistent organic compounds and nutrients in the order of 50% by the year 1995.

But to be realistic, one should admit that abatement of pollution does not face a lack of decisions but in most cases a lack of necessary resources.

The Ronneby Conference on Prime Minister level (September 1990), initiated by Sweden and Poland, was a turning-point in the Commission's history as it bridged the "implementation" gap between HELCOM decisions and restoration of the Baltic Sea marine environment. The process launched in Ronneby resulted in the Baltic Sea Joint Comprehensive Environmental Action Programme (JCP) which focuses the urgent environmental curative measures, mainly in the countries in transition, and outlines them in realistic technical and financial terms.

The long-term Programme will be implemented in a phased manner over a period of at least 20 years. The total cost of the Programme is estimated to be about 18 billion ECU.

The underlying strategy on which the Programme is based consists of six major elements:

1. Policies, Laws and Regulations
2. Institutional Strengthening and Human Resource Development
3. Investment Activities, including point sources and non-point sources
4. Management Programmes for Coastal Lagoons and Wetlands
5. Applied Research
6. Public Awareness and Environmental Education

During the initial year of Programme activities (1992-93), emphasis has been placed on establishing priorities at the national level, and on detailed preparation of projects including feasibility studies. Not surprisingly financial constraints turned out to be a crucial issue.

In order to facilitate the mobilization of local, national, bilateral and international financial resources for the implementation of the Programme, the High Level Conference on Resource Mobilization was arranged at ministerial level in March 1993 in Gdansk, Poland.

The Gdansk Conference yielded at least two important results. One is the high level political confirmation of the preparedness to support the Programme financially in the form of continued appropriations of grants. Another is the establishment of the dialogues between potential donors and recipient countries. The Conference discussions will undoubtedly serve as a valuable source of knowledge and inspiration for actors in the national arenas and in the multilateral institutions.

The Conference also confirmed the willingness of intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations to contribute with specific competence to the Programme implementation.

Finally, the Gdansk Conference endorsed the Programme Implementation Framework which identifies the key parties, funding sources and key activities needed in each element during the initial phase of the Programme (1993-1997).

The Framework assumes effective participation of national governments, local administrations, private sector, regional organizations and NGOs (UBC, WWF, Coalition Clean Baltic and International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives). It also assumes strong involvement of the expertise of RELCOM Committees, e.g., in point source pollution control, abatement of non-point source pollution, applied research and follow-up work.

Your Conference programme gives a clear indication that the UBC is willing to be strongly involved in practical implementation of at least three elements of JCP. On behalf of the Helsinki Commission I would like to pay tribute to the UBC for your endeavours to contribute effectively to the implementation of the JCP, especially in regard to institutional strengthening and human resources, know-how transfer and environmental education. I would like to emphasize also that RELCOM and its Programme Implementation Task Force feel quite confident in the capacity and competence of the Union to fulfil the undertakings.

The Helsinki Commission would always welcome further initiatives of the UBC, e.g. in collection of information about various regional interstate activities pertinent to the implementation of the JCP happening on non-governmental level.

I would then stop here and wish you all best of luck.

THE COUNCIL OF THE BALTIC SEA STATES- THE SECOND YEAR OF ACTIVITY

CBSS: REASONS AND GOALS.

The Copenhagen Ministerial Session, which established the CBSS in March 1992, underlined several priority areas of joint action. It was the common understanding of the foreign ministers of the ten participating states and the EC Commission representative that the issues deserving particular interest are those related to the stability and well-being of the Baltic Sea region as a whole.

Looking at the Baltic Sea region from the global perspective, we can identify several features which make the region comparatively homogenous and cooperation between the parties to the CBSS strongly motivated.

First, the region is not split by radically different world religions, such as for instance Islam and Christianity, as it is often the case with other geo-political entities. There exists a cobweb of common cultural, historical, economic, etc. ties tying the peoples around the Baltic Sea together. The rather breath-taking increase of contacts and interaction between the Baltic Sea states after the elimination of the artificial wall of the Cold War has been based largely on such natural affinity.

Second., the existence of an unquestionable focal point, the Baltic Sea, which is a common concern to all the states around it, necessitates joint action and larger programs in order to lessen the ecological risks contained in the present management of the sea. Recently new problems- such as narcotraffic, illegal migration, international criminality - have risen which can only be addressed jointly by the littoral states if they are to be handled. The concerns related to safe navigation cannot be neglected either.

Third, the Baltic Sea states have acknowledged that economic success in Northern Europe can only be achieved if political stability and democratic development will be guaranteed and the economic and cultural potential of these states is reasonably utilized. At present the region suffers from considerable imbalance over the former East-West divide which does not contribute to regional political-economic stability. The Baltic states, Poland and Russia have to deal with numerous problems related to economic transition and political reorientation.

Economic recession, with consequent social difficulties, has presented serious challenges also to the Nordic countries and Germany.

The existence of the significant welfare gap in the region which literally divides the Baltic Sea States into the wealthy West and needy East is one important, but nevertheless not primary feature of the Baltic Sea region. The mere fact of unequal welfare situation is not a sufficient motor of development. What actually triggers the development and interaction across the Baltic Sea is the fact, that precisely in the "needy" states we may see notable economic growth taking place whereas stability seems to be synonym to economic stagnation in the Nordic countries. Thus, what really matters, is the prospects of economic growth of the Eastern states of the region.

Those three major factors which make regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea area interesting, determine also the goals of such interaction. Generally we could distinguish between two sets of goals: the long-term objectives and the short-term tasks.

The *publicly most advertised* long-term objectives spring from the third argument. As the then Danish foreign minister Mr. Uffe Elleman-Jensen put it in his opening speech in Copenhagen, "the Baltic Sea region is no longer a blind alley on the outskirts of Europe but has the potential for becoming a new zone of growth close to the centre of Europe. Indeed, I see the Baltic Sea region as one of the most important zones of growth in Europe in the coming decade. The Baltic region contains a diverse industrial structure, access to raw materials and a highly educated work force. We must do our best to create the, right kind of framework to realize the growth potential of the region."

* Another no less important long-term objective connected with the

- previous one, springs from the logic of the European integration. Cooperation in the Baltic region should facilitate the linkage of the European Community with the non-member countries of the region. This explains the membership of EC Commission in the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the fact that the initiators of the CBSS were the only two countries within the Community, Germany and Denmark. Evidently the Community regards regional cooperation as an integral part of further European integration.

Thus the Council of the Baltic Sea States, although a nascent body which still has to prove its efficiency, has a potential to play an important role in enhancing the "regional identity". Even not being a security organization, the Council serves as a forum for discussion and confidence building with a primary aim to contribute to political-economic stability and the continuation of democratic processes in the member-states.

The short-term, or immediate objectives are actually the steps needed to achieve the two major goals. The six priority areas of action listed by the Copenhagen Conference cover broadly the scope of cooperation. They indicate that in the first order the CBSS aims to promote cooperation in the field of democratic development and coordinate economic and technological interaction which form the basis to regional interaction in such fields as humanitarian matters, ecology and energy, culture, tourism, information and education.

The short-term goals thus change when the situation alters or when the aims are reached. Identifying and realizing the short-term objectives is the primary task of the Council, and consequently of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), the inter-sessional working body of the CBSS.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE CBSS.

The structure of the CBSS is modest, if compared to several international organizations which can boast with large bureaucracies and budgets allowing jet-set way of life for their numerous top officials. Given the financial input provided for those organizations by the member-states, their output tends to be insufficient, if not to say meagre. In most states parties to these organizations general dissatisfaction with such input/output relation has increased recently.

In the light of growing demand for efficiency, and being confronted with their own budget restrictions, the founders of the Council of the Baltic Sea States decided to avoid heavy institutionalization as well as budgetary burden. This in no means should indicate weak interest towards this novel body. Quite the contrary- the rotating chairmanship as well as the fact that there are no official positions in the Council with financial implications should contribute to the Council's work being more efficient and reality-based.

The Council, i.e. the Foreign Ministers of the member-states and the representative of the EC Commission, meets once every year in the Ministerial Session which is held in the Chairman country. The III Ministerial Session will take place in MAY 1994 in Tallinn, as Estonia is the present chairman of the CBSS.

The Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) which consists of the senior officials of the corresponding MFAs, mainly on the level of ambassadors and heads of departments, is charged by the Council to carry out the actual coordination and promotion of regional activities. The CSO meets on a regular basis in the chairman country.

The CSO has a capacity to initiate working groups or expert meetings to discuss various subjects in length and enable concentration on certain areas during a longer period of time. During its first year the CSO established 3 working groups:

1. The Working Group on Assistance to New Democratic Institutions;
2. The Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety;
3. The Working Group on Euro-faculty.

The Working Group on Economic and Technical cooperation was established by the CSO in June 1993.

The Estonian initiative to form a working group on joint information network of the Baltic Sea has not met overall support among the member-states, but the issues related to this topic remain on the agenda of the CSO.

The working groups study the matters delegated into their competence by the CSO and report back to the CSO, making recommendations on the necessary action in the particular fields. They can be in contact with relevant authorities and contribute to organizing special meetings of the CBSS.

THE PRESENT AGENDA: SHORT OUTLINE OF ISSUES DEALT WITH IN THE WORKING GROUPS AND THE CSO.

I. Working Group on Assistance to New Democratic Institutions.

The Working Group on Assistance to New Democratic Institutions was established by the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials on May 21st 1992. This WG has not elected a permanent chairman, thus its chairmanship, as well as the session sites, have been rotating among the members.

During its three meetings in the first year the working group studied the state of affairs in the field of democratic development in the member-states and identified priority areas of action. As listed in the report of the working group -1, the priority areas are as following:

- a) exchange of information and experiences on the functioning of democratic institutions; assistance in establishing new democratic institutions;
- b) establishment of legal and administrative structures, including legislation in the field of public and private law, setting up of constitutional jurisdiction as well as creation of an independent system of justice and administration;
- c) development of local democracy and self-government;
- d) promotion of free press and media;
- e) human rights education; assistance in adaptation to and implementation of international standards and norms on human rights and the rule of law, including in relation to persons belonging to national minorities, refugees and migrants.
- e) creation of an information and cooperation network of institutions and research programmes and projects in the field of transition to democracy and development of democratic institutions.

The Working Group will initiate and support programmes and projects by national and international institutions and organizations, inter alia, in the form of technical assistance, counselling, organization of conferences, seminars, study tours, fellowships, lectures and orientation courses. It will cooperate with the PHARE and TACIS Programmes, the Danish Democracy Fund and the German Foundation for International Legal Cooperation.

At the Helsinki Ministerial Session in March 1993 the Ministers delegated both the CSO and the Working Group a task of elaborating the mandate for the CBSS Commissioner for Human Rights and Minorities Questions. The WG meeting in Tallinn in the late May discussed in length the issues connected with the establishment of the Commissioner institution. The Commissioner should not duplicate the work done by other institutions and organizations in the region and thus the specific niche for the Commissioner has to be found which would enable him or her to be efficient in promoting the protection of human rights and rights of persons belonging to minorities in the member-states of the CBSS.

The general perception of the mandate for the CBSS Commissioner is that it should not duplicate the work done by the CSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Mr. Max van der Stoep, who has been continuously active in the Baltic Sea region, particularly in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. To avoid

unnecessary overlapping of the work done by those institutions, a dialogue has been set up between the CSCE High Commissioner and the CBSS. It is expected that the CBSS Commissioner institution will be finalized before the next Ministerial Session in Tallinn in May 1994.

II. Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety.

This Working Group was formed by the CSO on April 27, 1992. ² The WG is chaired by professor Antti Vuorinen, Director General of the Finnish Centre for Radiation and Nuclear Safety. The tasks of the WG were agreed in the mandate as follows:

- 1) to collect information about nuclear facilities and waste storages in the Baltic Sea Region;
- 2) to identify the sources of radioactivity which pose a potential risk in the Baltic Sea Region;
- 3) to identify those nuclear and radiological potential risks that require immediate concerted action to reduce the risks;
- 4) to take stock of and monitor various projects aimed at enhancing nuclear and radiation safety in the Baltic Sea Region;
- 5) to prepare relevant recommendations and suggest and develop initiatives accordingly.

During the first year of activity the WG on Nuclear and Radiation Safety held 4 meetings. It has compiled initial information given by member-states of the CBSS about sources of interest relevant to the mandate of the WG.

The WG made about ten recommendations to the Council, among them recommendations to all the CBSS member-states to support the unconditional indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Regional Arrangement with participation of the European Community, covering an early notification mechanism and regular exchange of information and operational experiences concerning sources of potential radiological risks to the region. Another recommendation of the WG concerns the proposal to establish a Coordinating Group of competent authorities and an information sharing network to be set up to coordinate radiological environmental monitoring with participation of all member-states, the EC and outreach as considered appropriate to Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

The WG will continue its work to follow up the conclusions and recommendations its has made to the Council and to further clarify the situation in the field of nuclear and radiation safety.

III. Working Group on Euro-faculty.

The proposal to establish a Euro-faculty in the Baltic States was submitted by the then German Foreign Minister, Mr. Genscher and was the first concrete project adopted by the CBSS on its initial Copenhagen meeting. 3 The Euro-faculty was to support, develop and restructure higher education in the three Baltic States in the fields of Law, Economics, Public and Business Administration.

The CSO decided to set up a Working Group on Euro-faculty in order to progress the proposal on May 21, 1992. The Commission of European Communities accepted the responsibility for the coordination of the establishing of the Euro-faculty in the framework of the TEMPUS Programme.

An Academic Task Force consisting of representatives from all the member-states of the CBSS was appointed by the WG. The Academic Task Force visited the three universities in Riga, Tartu and Vilnius in September 1992 in order to make a recommendation to the WG as to the site of the Euro-faculty. Its unanimous recommendation was to place the Euro-faculty Centre in Riga, Latvia.

The II CBSS Ministerial Session in Helsinki decided to establish Euro-faculty Centre in Riga with branches in Estonia and Lithuania.

The Euro-faculty Centre will be a legally autonomous foundation and will refer to a Steering Committee, to which two representatives from each country involved and the Commission of the EC are appointed. The centre will be financed by national donations and the Commission of the EC through the TEMPUS programme. The following universities are participating in the Euro-faculty Project in the first year:

Tartu University, Estonia

University of Latvia, Latvia

Vilnius University, Lithuania

Aarhus University, Denmark

University of Hamburg, Germany

University of Kiel, Germany

University of Mlinster, Germany

Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden

London School of Economics, United Kingdom

The University of Helsinki, Finland, Norwegian School of Management, Norway, Wroclaw University, Poland, Gdansk University, Poland, St.Petersburg University and Kaliningrad University from Russia will participate in the activities of the Euro-faculty Centre when their financial contribution has been settled.

The first phase of the activities under the umbrella of the Euro-faculty Centre will begin in September 1993 with the training/ updating of academic staff and postgraduate students (approximately 150) , together with upgrading of the existing libraries in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The second phase starting in September 1994, is envisaged to run regular undergraduate and postgraduate courses in subjects selected by the Baltic universities according to the identified needs. The total budget for the first two years is 4, 889,300 ECU, a budget for the activities including the UK in the programme has not yet been finalized.

IV. Working Group on Economic and Technical Cooperation.

As a result of several expert meetings on economic and technical cooperation held during 1992/93 which identified the need for general coordination, the CSO decided to form a Working Group on Economic and Technical Cooperation. The immediate task of the Working Group is to prepare a joint meeting of the CSO and the representatives of international financial institutions which are active in the Baltic Sea region, such as the World Bank, the EBRD, the EIB, the NIB, etc. This meeting should bring the supply and demand side together in fields where urgent financial input is needed in order to improve the general conditions of regional trade and economic development. These are projects concerning infrastructure, communications and energy networks in the Baltic Sea area, particularly in the Eastern part of it.

CONCLUSIONS.

The logic of development during the recent decades in the whole world has brought out two key factors which are of major importance to a country's ability to cope with the pace of changes: the level of modernity of the infrastructure and the access to information. The improvement of regional cooperation and the emergence of the whole Baltic Sea region as a new growth area in Europe are vitally dependent on whether the regional infrastructure, communications and information networks, particularly on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, will catch up with modern standards or whether they remain crippled for years to come.

In this context it is natural that CBSS deals with issues of information exchange and follows closely also the negative co-developments which have surfaced simultaneously with positive interaction: increase of international criminality across the Baltic Sea, problems in guaranteeing

navigation safety and preventing illegal migration, etc. The Council is a body which accumulates relevant information and thus is able to analyze and direct the developments.

Inter-state bodies, such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States, play an important role as coordinators and catalysts of cooperation between the member-states. Whereas other fora and specialized organizations deal with coordinating practical activities of various functional areas, the CBSS is a fora where different approaches can be discussed, and general strategies for the region can be formulated.

The subsidiary principle, according to which decision-making takes place on the optimal level, will strengthen European integration. The stronger the regional bodies such as the CBSS, the stronger Europe as a whole.