

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE BALTIC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Adopted by the Heads of Government of the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania at Tallinn on 13 June 1994.

Amended by the Heads of Government of the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania at Vilnius on 28 November 2003.

Article 1.

The Baltic Council of Ministers is an institution of co-operation between the Governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The Baltic Council of Ministers is enjoined with the tasks of:

- promoting extensive and substantial co-operation;
- addressing, drafting and implementing relevant measures;
- carrying out the tasks assigned in accordance with the agreements concluded.

Article 2.

The Baltic Council of Ministers is comprised of:

- the Prime Ministers' Council, consisting of the Heads of Government of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania;
- the Co-operation Council, consisting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania;
- the Secretariat, consisting of the officials responsible for the Baltic co-operation at the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania;
- the Committees of Senior Officials, consisting of one senior official from each country and a sufficient number of experts, acting in a certain area of co-operation.

Article 3.

The Baltic Council of Ministers operates under the guidance of the Prime Ministers' Council.

The Prime Ministers' Council adopts basic documents in priority areas of co-operation.

The annual meeting of the Prime Ministers' Council shall be convened on the initiative of the country holding the chairmanship of the Baltic Council of Ministers. Extraordinary meetings may be convened if necessary on the initiative of any member of the Prime Ministers' Council.

The Prime Ministers' Council shall be assisted by other members of government, if needed.

Article 4.

The Co-operation Council is responsible for overall co-ordination of Baltic co-operation.

The tasks of the Co-operation Council include:

- approving the priorities of Baltic co-operation and the report of the Chairman of the Co-operation Council to the Baltic Assembly;
- adopting the annual action plan for the Baltic Council of Ministers;

- deciding on matters referred to the Co-operation Council by the Secretariat;
- assisting in preparations for the Prime Ministers' Council meeting.
- making decisions with regard to the recommendations of the Baltic Assembly.

Article 5.

The Secretariat shall:

- act on the initiative of the chairmanship in preparation for the meetings of the Prime Ministers' Council and the Co-operation Council;
- draft the priorities of the Baltic co-operation and the report of the Chairman of the Co-operation Council to the Baltic Assembly and present these for approval by the Co-operation Council;
- draft the annual action plan for the Baltic Council of Ministers and present the plan for adoption by the Co-operation Council;
- arrange activities of the Baltic Council of Ministers;
- serve as a link for exchange of information and documentation with the Committees of Senior Officials;
- provide information on the activities of the Baltic Council of Ministers.

Article 6.

Committees of Senior Officials shall:

- act at respective area of co-operation at the expert level;
- submit proposals within their area of co-operation for the priorities of Baltic co-operation and for the annual action plan of the Baltic Council of Ministers;
 - submit proposals within their area of co-operation for the agenda of the Prime Ministers' Council and the Co-operation Council;
 - prepare drafts within their area of co-operation of the report of the Chairman of the Co-operation Council to the Baltic Assembly;
 - submit proposals to the Co-operation Council on the recommendations of the Baltic Assembly to the Baltic Council of Ministers.

The chairmanship of the committees is exercised by the senior official of the country holding the chairmanship of the Baltic Council of Ministers.

Each committee shall adopt its annual action plan and present the report about its activities during the previous year. Documents of the Committees of Senior Officials are communicated to the Co-operation Council by the Secretariat.

The Committees of Senior Officials are established and dissolved by the Prime Ministers' Council at the proposal of the Co-operation Council.

Article 7.

The chairmanship of the Baltic Council of Ministers shall be rotated among Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on an annual basis starting from the beginning of the calendar year.

The chairmanship shall be actively engaged in directing the work carried out on all levels of co-operation.

The country holding the chairmanship shall, if not otherwise decided by the Co-operation Council, represent the Baltic Council of Ministers in relations with other international organisations.

Article 8.

The Baltic Council of Ministers shall have the power of decision when the authorised representatives from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are present.

Decisions in the Baltic Council of Ministers shall be taken by consensus.

Decisions of the Baltic Council of Ministers are binding for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, provided the decisions agree with the national legislation of each country.

Article 9.

The Baltic Council of Ministers shall co-operate with the Baltic Assembly:

- at the Baltic Council;
- at the level of the Committees of Senior Officials with the Committees of the Baltic Assembly;
- at the level of the Secretariat of the Baltic Council of Ministers with the Secretariat of the Baltic Assembly.

Article 10.

Each country shall defray the costs of its participation in the Baltic Council of Ministers.

The Co-operation Council shall decide on any joint expenditures and scales of distribution.

Article 11.

Documents and minutes of the meetings of the Baltic Council of Ministers shall be entered in a register kept by the Secretariat.

The minutes shall be approved by silent procedure.

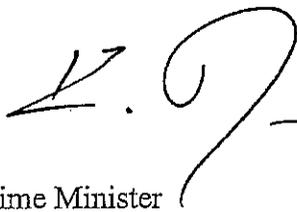
Article 12.

These Terms of Reference may be amended by the Prime Ministers' Council.

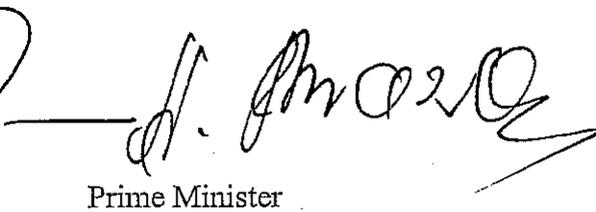
Done on 28 November 2003 at Vilnius in three copies in English language.



Prime Minister
of the Republic of Estonia



Prime Minister
of the Republic of Latvia



Prime Minister
of the Republic of Lithuania