

Northern Dimension

Published: 02.07.2021.

One of directions in the foreign policy of Latvia is promoting competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region, which also includes support for the EU Northern Dimension (ND) policy, through participation in producing and implementing the new ND political framework document.

Establishment and scope

The EU's Northern Dimension policy concept was presented by Prime Minister of Finland Paavo Lipponen at the Barents Euro-Arctic Council meeting in September 1997.

The ND policy covers a broad geographic area, ranging from the European Arctic to the southern shores of the Baltic Sea, and from the regions of north-west Russia to Iceland and Greenland. The ND cooperation projects are, for the most part, implemented in Northwest Russia and Kaliningrad Oblast. Belarus has been actively involved in ND cooperation since 2009.

Basic principles:

The ND is a common policy shared by the EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland.

The ND includes practical implementation of the [EU and Russia four common spaces policy](#) in the regions of north-west Russia.

Observers: the United States, Canada (Belarus participates in expert level cooperation in ND partnerships and framework).

Other participants of the ND: the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), the Arctic Council (AC), the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB) and the World Bank.

While implementing the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the ND is a significant format for cooperation with the countries of the region – non-members of the EU.

Key frameworks for the ND cooperation

The ND cooperation mainly takes place within partnerships. Their functioning has not been made uniform: a proposal for the ND Foreign Ministers' decision on institutional arrangements for each partnership is drafted by a special *ad hoc* preparation group.

[ND Environmental Partnership](#) works with specific environmental projects (water quality, wastewater treatment, waste management) and nuclear safety projects (spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste management). In the nearest future there are plans to expand cooperation in the field of energy efficiency and renewable energy resources. Partners: the governments of Russia, France, Canada, Germany, Sweden, Finland, UK, Denmark and Norway, the European Commission and several [international financial institutions](#). Contributors: the governments of Belgium and Belarus. The projects are implemented in the north-western regions of Russia and the Kaliningrad Oblast.

[ND Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing](#) holds regular consultations for experts in the following fields: - HIV/AIDS; - prison health systems; - primary health care; - social inclusion policy, healthy lifestyle and occupational health. [Four Expert Groups](#) and [four Task Groups](#) have been set up. **Partners:** Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Canada, the European Commission, as well as a number of regional cooperation and health protection organisations. In view of not very successful fundraising, [a partnership strategy](#) was adopted in September 2009, outlining medium term tasks for increasing the effectiveness of the partnership's activities and promoting its visibility. The partnership coordinates cooperation towards implementing the health priority under the [EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region](#) Action Plan.

ND Partnership for Transport and Logistics aims at enhancing major transport links and logistics in the ND region, thus contributing to sustainable economic growth at the local, regional and global scale. Partners: ministries in charge of transport, infrastructure and logistics of Norway, Russia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden and Belarus. The Partnership Steering Committee has identified 70 projects to be implemented within the partnership. The Permanent Secretariat of the Partnership has started operations on the facilities of the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB) office in Helsinki, Finland.

[ND Partnership on Culture](#) is the framework for promoting cooperation of cultural institutions, creative entrepreneurs and business community partnerships in the ND region. Partners: ministries in charge of cultural matters of Norway, Russia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden and Belarus, as well as the European Commission.

NDPC has developed Strategy for 2012-2016. The main tasks defined there: serving as a focal point for cultural and creative industries in the whole ND area; supporting priority projects which have an impact on the development of cross border cooperation in the ND area, facilitating access to project financing.

The work of the Partnership is coordinated by a secretariat hosted by NCM Office in Riga, Latvia.

[ND Institute](#) is a cooperation framework jointly initiated by St. Petersburg State University (Russia) and Lappeenranta University of Technology (Finland) and based on the idea of a regional network of universities for conducting high quality research.

In March 2010, [fifteen universities in the Baltic Sea Region countries](#) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the Northern Dimension Institute. Until May 2011, the Memorandum of Understanding was signed by 24 universities, including Riga International School of Economics and Business Administrations (RSEBAA) from Latvia. New higher education and research institutions keep joining this partnership platform, which is also open for partners from other regions. Four scientific thematic groups have been set up in the ND Institute: energy and the environment; culture and society; public health and social well-being; and transport and logistics. The ND Institute is planning to join as a partner in the cooperation of other ND bodies. Producing studies on aspects of cooperation in the ND region is regarded as by the ND Institute as one of its areas of activity.

ND Business Council is a non-bureaucratic and flexible cooperation format (the establishment of a separate permanent secretariat is not yet being considered) the aim of which is to create a platform for making and maintaining contacts between companies, provide an opportunity for public administration and businesses to engage in a dialogue, and ensure the protection of entrepreneurs' interests while pursuing the ND policy. The initiative to establish a ND Business Council came from Russia (OJSC *Severstal*) and Finland (energy company, *Fortum Corporation*) in 2009.

Partnership	Year of est.	Establishing documents	Lead organisation / administrative support	Representation of Latvia	Legal framework for Latvia's participation
-------------	--------------	------------------------	--	--------------------------	--

ND Environmental Partnership (NDEP)	2001	Rules of the ND Environmental Partnership Support Fund	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and its regional office, St. Petersburg (Russia)	Observers at meetings of Supervisory Committee, represented by Ministry of Finance. Experts form Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development involved in separate ND programmes.	None
ND Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing (NDPHS)	2003	Declaration concerning the Establishment of Partnership Memorandum of Understanding on Establishing a Secretariat (25.11.2009)	Secretariat in Stockholm, Sweden.	Founding Partner, represented by Ministry of Health.	Agreement on Setting up a Secretariat for the ND Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing (Minutes No.67 of the Cabinet Sitting of 15.11.2011; 40§)
Northern Dimension Institute (NDI)	2009	Memorandum of understanding on the Establishment of the NDI (29.03.2010)	NDI cooperation coordinators. Lead partners: St. Petersburg State University (Russia) and Lappeenranta University of Technology (Finland)	MoU on the establishment of the NDI has been signed by Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration (<i>RSEBAA</i>).	None

ZD Transport and Logistics Partnership (NDTLP)	200 9	Memorandum of Understanding setting out the modalities of establishing the NDTLP (21.10.2009); Agreement on setting up a Secretariat for the NDTLP (08.06.2010).	Permanent Secretariat of the partnership within the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB) in Helsinki (Finland) – from January 2011.	Partner country (one of the founders), represented by the Ministry of transport.	Memorandum of Understanding (Minutes No.72 of the Cabinet sitting of 20.10.2009; 32§; in Latvian) Agreement on the Secretariat (Minutes No.72 of the Cabinet sitting of 25.05.2010; 54§ , in Latvian) Amendments to Financial Annex to the Agreement on the Secretariat (Minutes No 73 of the Cabinet Sitting of 14.12.2010; 35§ , in Latvian)
ND Partnership on Culture (NDPC)	201 0	Memorandum of Understanding setting out the modalities of establishing the NDPC (20.05.2010)	Secretariat hosted by NCM Office in Riga (Latvia)	Partner (signatory of the MoU), represented by the Ministry of Culture.	Memorandum of Understanding (Minutes No 25 of the Cabinet Sitting of 18.05.2010; 47§ , in Latvian)
ND Business Council (NDBC)	201 0	None	Initiators – OJSC <i>Severstal</i> (Russia) and <i>Fortum Corporation</i> (Finland). Establishing a secretariat has not been discussed yet.	Latvian Transit Business Association has expressed interest in joining the NDBC Logistics Wo	