

# Baltic Sea Region

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## Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region

The Baltic Sea Region today is one of the most dynamic in Europe, with a high economic and political potential, the strategic significance of which has also been increased by the EU and NATO enlargement.

Since regaining independence, Latvia has actively engaged not only in bilateral, but also multilateral cooperation in the region in such frameworks as, e.g., the Baltic Assembly, the Baltic Council of Ministers, Baltic and Nordic cooperation fora, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Northern Dimension, the Baltic Development Forum and E-Pine.

The dynamism of the Baltic Sea Region is well characterised both by the ability of those frameworks to evolve in response to global processes of political and economic integration, and by the emergence of new initiatives. A considerable momentum for the promotion of sustainable development in the region is the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, approved by the Council of the European Union in October 2009.

Cooperation among the EU Member States of the Baltic Sea Region can be regarded an important instrument in forging common EU policies. An exchange of opinions and coordination of positions on topical EU-related and foreign policy matters are facilitated by informal consultation mechanisms: the Baltic and Nordic countries (NB6); the Baltic states, Nordic countries, Poland and Germany (NB6+2); the Baltic states and Germany, the Baltic states and France (3+1 formats); the Baltic states and the Benelux (Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxembourg) countries (3+3), etc. Consultations help to clarify the interests of the region's countries concerning important EU issues, while the informal character of the talks ensures an open exchange of opinions. To enable an effective protection of Latvia's interests in the EU and other international organisations, Latvia will continue taking part in such consultations at the level of the heads of government, foreign ministers and experts.



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