

Joint Statement by the Presidents of Poland and Finland

Presidents Bronisław Komorowski and Sauli Niinistö reaffirm the commitment to the enhanced bilateral cooperation that was initiated by the *Joint Communiqué of Prime Ministers of Poland and Finland* of 19 December 2011. Referring to the 2013 *Review Document on Enhanced Cooperation between Poland and Finland*, the Presidents declare both countries' interest in further expanding enhanced cooperation in the following fields: economy, energy, ICT, justice and border protection, environmental protection, security, education, Eastern policy, agriculture, and culture. The Presidents advocate sustaining intensive Polish-Finnish dialogue at the political and expert levels, and continuing the existing and implementing new joint projects and initiatives (in particular the Ministerial Forum for Member States of the Schengen Area with External Land Borders, launched by Poland and Finland in 2013).

Polish-Finnish cooperation retains a strong Baltic character that draws on both countries' view of the Baltic Sea region as an area with special development potential. The Presidents of Poland and Finland believe that enhanced bilateral cooperation offers an excellent platform for dialogue on current international challenges and issues on the EU agenda.

President S. Niinistö's state visit to Poland was an opportunity to discuss many fields of enhanced cooperation. The Presidents would like to place particular emphasis on shared views on security policy, Russia and Ukraine, and cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region.

Security Policy

In view of the European security situation, the importance of Polish-Finnish security policy cooperation is growing. It is one of the pillars of broader collaboration in the Baltic Sea Region. Areas with significant potential include cooperation of defence industries, issues related to hybrid threats, including cooperation of special forces and cyber security, as well as exchange of cooperation experience within regional formats.

We are ready to support actions that will restore trust in and credibility of the fundamental norms that became the basis of international relations in our region 40 years ago, in the wake of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe at Helsinki.

In the spirit of the Partnership Interoperability Initiative and Enhanced Opportunities programme, we endorse further development of political dialogue and practical collaboration between NATO and partner countries, with a view to improving the stability and security of our countries, and increasing our defence capabilities. Our dialogue should cover the implementation of the Readiness Action Plan (RAP), as well as the NATO Response Force (NRF) and the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF).

Developing European defence and security capabilities is important for the European Union. We look forward to the European Council adopting guidelines that further reinforce the Common Security and Defence Policy. The European Union also needs a new European security strategy, increasing the EU's capability to respond to threats and challenges, and intensifying cooperation with partners.

Eastern policy

We follow with great concern violations of the Minsk agreements and emphasize the need for a peaceful solution. We support all efforts to avoid further escalation, reiterate our full support to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission and express our respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea was a flagrant violation of international law and foundations of the European order.

We welcome the commitment of Ukraine to implement reforms and reconfirm our firm support in these endeavours.

We acknowledge the high importance of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga on 21-22 May, and share the vision of strategic and ambitious Partnership as one based on mutual interests, commitments and supporting sustainable reform processes in each partner country.

Baltic Sea Cooperation

With its ever closer integration and cooperation, the Baltic Sea region holds considerable development potential, offering its citizens good prospects for the future. We should exploit it wisely by increasing the EU's engagement, and making good use of such cooperation instruments as the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the Northern Dimension, and the Council of the Baltic Sea States, mechanisms aimed at enhancing the region's cohesion and synergy. It is of fundamental importance to keep stimulating the development of regional relations at all levels, including people-to-people contacts, which are key to a greater sense of regional identity, responsibility, security, understanding and trust – conditions that foster the rise of a common Baltic area of cooperation.

Poland and Finland will work together especially closely during Poland's Presidency of the CBSS (2015-2016).