Basic information

1998/2227(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) The Union's policies: a Northern dimension, Russia and Baltic countries. Vienna European Council **Subject** 4.70.05 Regional cooperation, cross-border cooperation 6.40.02.02 Relations with northern Europe and the Baltic States 6.40.04.02 Relations with Russian Federation **Geographical area** Baltic Sea area Russian Federation	Procedure completed

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy	MATIKAINEN-KALLSTRÖM Marjo (PPE)	20/04/1999

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development		
REGI Regional Policy	MYLLER Riitta (PSE)	23/02/1999
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
General Affairs	2186	1999-05-31

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
25/11/1998	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1998)0589	Summary
12/02/1999	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
20/04/1999	Vote in committee		

20/04/1999	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0209/1999	
04/05/1999	End of procedure in Parliament		
31/05/1999	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
01/10/1999	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1998/2227(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148 Rules of Procedure EP 050
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/4/10589

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0209/1999 OJ C 279 01.10.1999, p. 0006	20/04/1999	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0345/1999 OJ C 279 01.10.1999, p. 0020-0031	04/05/1999	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1998)0589	25/11/1998	Summary
Follow-up document	SEC(2002)1296	26/11/2002	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2003)0343	10/06/2003	Summary
Follow-up document	SEC(2003)1483	23/12/2003	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0107/1999 OJ C 374 23.12.1999, p. 0001	15/09/1999	

The Union's policies: a Northern dimension, Russia and Baltic countries. Vienna European Council

1998/2227(COS) - 04/05/1999 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the resolution by Marjo Matikainen-Kallström (PPE,FI) on the Communication from the Commission - A Northern Dimension for the policies of the Union. The report urges the Commission to make all the requisite measures compatible with existing instruments and policies in an effective manner so that the long-term objectives of the Northern Dimension are attained. It also urges the Commission to participate in the work of the Arctic Council. The Parliament calls on the Commission to update, as necessary, relevant Accession Partnerships to take the Northern Dimension into account. Stressing that the special conditions in the northern regions should be taken into account in developing the EU's policies in connection with the reform of the Structural Funds, the Parliament wishes to see priority given to inter-regional and cross-border cooperation. It considers that the Interreg, PHARE and TACIS programmes could be used to enhance the Baltic programme included in the budget for 1999. Equally, the Parliament calls on the Commission to promote, under the Fifth Framework Programme, research studies with relevance to the Northern Dimension on the environment and health, sustainable forestry and a sustainable forestry industry, climate change and biodiversity, marine research, utilisation of remote sensing methods, telematic applications for sparsely populated areas, nuclear safety and cleaner energy generation. Considering that initial actions under the Northern Dimension can be funded through existing EU budget lines, the Parliament calls on the Commission to continue funding the project for the processing and disposal of intermediate-level and low-level nuclear wastes in the Kola Peninsula as well as to continue supporting financially and technically the decommissioning of the Ignalina nuclear power station in Lithuania and to investigate the possibility of decommissioning the Sosnovvi Bar nuclear power station in Russia. The report calls for the provision of aid for the removal of abandoned military installations and the rehabilitation of the land thereby released. It underlines that financing for the priority areas of the Northern Dimension should involve private sector investments as well as international financial institutions such as the IBRD, the EIB, the EBRD and the Nordic Investment Bank and that EU funds should be increasingly earmarked for long-term investment-related projects and feasability studies. The Parliament calls on the Commission to devise a comprehensive plan to fight organised crime in this area in time for the Tampere summit in October 1999 and equally calls for the development of cooperation with the authorities of Russia and other Baltic Sea Region States on matters falling within the scope of the third pillar (especially drug trafficking and money laundering). The report also calls for negotiations between the EU and Russia regarding the sometimes inexplicable and immense problems of customs duties and border crossings and urges the Commission to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches the people of North-Western Russia. With regard to energy, the Parliament supports an extension tothe Baltic of the Nordic electricity grid. With regard to Union internal policy, it wishes the Commission's Inter-Service Task Force for the Northern Dimension to start operating as soon as possible, under the direction of a single Commissioner and endowed with adequate resources for it to fulfil its role of coordination and management. Finally, the Parliament calls on both the Council and the Commission to make careful preparations for the conference on the Northern Dimension to be held in November, paving the way for a subsequent "Northern Summit", to be attended by all countries encompassed within the Northern Dimension, including Canada and the United States.

The Union's policies: a Northern dimension, Russia and Baltic countries. Vienna European Council

1998/2227(COS) - 25/11/1998 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : To present a European strategy for closer relations with the countries in North-Eastern Europe. CONTENT : The Commission was requested to prepare this report at the Cardiff Summit in June 1998. It follows on from Finland's proposal concerning a Northern Dimension in the policies of the Union in view of its border with Russia and the serious challenges it faces with respect to the environment. This report : - recalls the union's activities and instruments with regard to the Northern dimension; - sets out the challenges facing this region and identifies areas where the EU could provide value added; and - establishes guidelines and proposes operational recommendations for future activity in this area. It points to the fact that the Northern region is of particular significance to the EU as it is a region of great natural resources, with considerable human and economic potential. Aspects of its environmental situation are a cause of concern and will present a major challenge to future generations. The Northern region is also the Union's only direct geographical link with the Russian Federation and, as such, is important for co-operation between the EU and that country. The EU provides considerable financial assistance in support of the countries of Northern Europe. In view of the accession of Sweden and Finland in 1995, the European Community put in place structural assistance designed specifically to address issues related to the EU's northern regions which have an extremely low population density. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland all benefit from the Phare programme which supports their preparations for EU membership. The Russian Federation is a beneficiary of the Tacis programme. In terms of the challenges facing the Union, three main priorities have been pinpointed : security, stability and sustainable development. In the field of nuclear waste, the problems are such that a vigorous and comprehensive approach is needed to resolve them. It is therefore important to create a climate favourable to such change and to incorporate high environment protection standards in all new industrial investment. The region is also home to substantial natural resources, such as natural gas, oli, minerals and forest resources. It is in the EU's interests to ensure that it has secure and reliable sources of energy. The EC is becoming increasingly dependent on imported energy and this trend will be reinforced with Community enlargement. At the same time, the share of gas in energy consumption in the Community is expected to increase. The EU, therefore, needs to diversify sources and ensure that it has access to modern networks that can deliver energy imports. The economic development and interdependency of the North will require the development of transport infrastructures and establishment of new connections with European-wide networks. The future successful development of the economy in the region will also require efficient telecommunications and postal networks and information systems supporting modern business activity, as well as stronger competition and state aid rules to ensure that businesses compete fairly. The further promotion of the Northern Dimension concept shouldtake place where there is clear added value, within the existing instruments and frameworks, and should be based on contractual relationships such as Partnership and Co-operation Agreement with Russia and Europe Agreements with the Baltic States and Poland. It should be seen as a means to strengthen the Union's external policies and available instruments in the region. At the same time, it should also help to emphasise the positive inter-dependence between Russia and the Baltic Sea Region and the Union. The Northern Dimension approach shall in particular : - promote economic

development, stability and security in the region (exploitation of natural resources, especially in North-Western Russia) - address cross-border issues (present new cross-border technical assistance and investment programmes, as well as programmes promoting customs co-operation and helping in the fight against crime) - contribute to narrowing the disparities of living standards and prevent and ward off threats originating in the region (remove administrative barriers to trade and improve the transport infrastructure) - contribute to reducing environmental and nuclear threats (promote the establishment of an effective environmental administration and infrastructure, and introduction of pollution control measures to reduce trans-boundary pollution).

The Union's policies: a Northern dimension, Russia and Baltic countries. Vienna European Council

1998/2227(COS) - 10/06/2003 - Follow-up document

PURPOSE : To present the priorities for the second Northern Dimension Action Plan, 2004-2006. CONTENT : First established through an EU initiative in 2000 the initial Northern Dimension Action Plan will expire at the end of 2003. Thanks to the success of the Action Plan the European Commission has prepared the Second Northern Dimension Action Plan to cover the years 2004-2006. The geographic area covered by the Plan stretches from the Arctic and sub-Arctic to the southern shores of the Baltic and from Northwest Russia in the East to Iceland and Greenland in the west. The key purpose of the Action Plan is to provide a clear operational framework for all Northern Dimension stakeholders by setting strategic objectives, priorities and concrete activities. For it to be successful it requires the strong participation of all partners namely, the EU Member States, partner countries, regional bodies, civil society, the business world and research institutions. The effect of EU enlargement in 2004 will add to the need for enhanced co-operation and co-ordination. The Present Action Plan establishes five broad priority sectors: 1. The economy, business and infrastructure. Under this heading the Action Plan hopes to encourage and facilitate a favourable business climate through, for example, the removal of technical barriers to trade and investment. Other measure will include support for economic reforms and regulatory convergence in Russia. SME's will also be singled out for specific backing. Practical measures to facilitate trade will include improved border management to allow for reduced clearance time at border crossings. This heading also covers aspects such as the co-ordination of energy production and supply. Practical measures include, inter alia, the implementation of the North European Gas Pipeline, which is part of the EU TEN-E priorities. In terms of infrastructure the future activities in this filed will address bottlenecks and choke point in the Northern Dimension region. The basis for work will be provided by the Commission revision of the Guidelines for Tans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and the Commission White Paper on the "European transport Policy for 2010" Improving telecommunications and the promotion of the information society are also seen as vital to promoting a more co-ordinated economy. 2. Human resources, education scientific research and health The main thrust of these priorities will include the promotion of a "knowledge-based" region, to improve communication and information exchange in the scientific community in Russia and to address the challenges linked to the fight against major communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. Practical support for the latter point includes, for example the implementation of some 400 projects between 2004-2006 through the NCM Action Plan for Children and Youth in 3 Baltic Countries and Russia, to improve the health of children, particularly street/prison children. Funding is provided by the central and local authorities and partner NGO's 3. The Environment, Nuclear Safety and Natural Resources A lot of work and monitoring needs to be conducted under these headings. The main activities will focus on strengthening the EU-Russia dialogue on environmental issues as well as monitoring pollutants throughout the region. Measures will include activities such as the continued implementation of projectsfinanced in the framework of EU programmes such as Tacis, LIFE and INTERREG. Concerning nuclear safety, the Action Plan will implement projects included in the Nuclear Window of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership Support Fund. 4. Cross-Border Co-operation The priority will be to implement cross-border co-operation initiatives principally on economic and social development, environmental protection, transport and telecommunications, border crossings and border management, public health exchanges and cultural exchanges. 5. Justice and Home Affairs. With organised crime and immigration perceived as a real threat to the EU's internal security improved co-ordination in the field of Justice and Home Affairs is considered a must. The intention therefore is to improve co-ordination among national administrations and police forces to develop concrete operational measures between the EU and Russia and thereby increase the effectiveness of law enforcement co-operation. The Action Plan also takes account of the unique needs of both Kaliningrad and the Arctic Regions when implementing the priorities outlined above.

The Union's policies: a Northern dimension, Russia and Baltic countries. Vienna European Council

1998/2227(COS) - 26/11/2002 - Follow-up document

The principal objective of this 2002 Progress Report is to give an overview of the most important steps taken by the European Commission to implement the Northern Dimension Action Plan endorsed by the European Council in Freira in June 2000. The text is divided into thematic sectors. Each section features the main overall policy objectives at the beginning, followed by elements on types of activities and examples of concrete projects. On the matter of the political framework, the report states that bilateral and multilateral dialogue with Northern Dimension partners has been carried out in the last few months. With regard to bilateral relations with the Russian Federation, the report notes that there has been little progress on the Multilateral Nuclear Environmental Programme. This framework agreement has not been concluded despite diplomatic efforts by all parties. The report goes on outline projects with Canada and with the candidate countries belonging to the Northern Dimension. Turning to the priority sectors, seven are discussed: Infrastructure: The Northern Dimension area has vast energy resources and is very important for the supply of oil and gas to the EU. In order to secure the supply, a considerable level of investment will be required, in the next few years, for the development of the energy transport infrastructures and for the exploitation of the vast gas resources of the area. (See COM(2001)775). Another important aspect of the energy sector is related to structural reforms needed in view of the integration of some countries of the region into a single European energy market. As far as transport is concerned, improvement of infrastructure is vital for the development of the economy of the region. The overall objective is to develop a multi-modal transport system improving connections within the region and with neighbours. On information and communication technology, the Northern Dimension offers a platform helping to accelerate the transition to the information society. Due to the complexities of the region, there is a need for coordinated activities and increased commitment from national governments and other key actors. The report details the activities of NeDAP. Environment and Nuclear Safety: The Commission pays great attention to this sector. The main priorities remain environmental hotspots of air and water, climate

change, monitoring, cleaner production in SMEs, EIA review mechanisms and nuclear safety. The EU plays a central role in reducing the risks stemming from radioactive waste, spent fuel, nuclear submarines and obsolete nuclear reactors. The Commission has carried out several activities, mainly in the Kola Peninsula and in the Archangelsk Region, where several TACIS projects have been initiated, and in Lithuania, for the Ignalina NPP. Public health: Tackling the spread of communicable diseases and restructuring the health care systems in Russia and in the candidate countries continue to be among the principal objectives. Particular attention has been paid recently to broaden the scope of public health actions to include life-style related factors such as tobacco, drug and alcohol abuse, and nutrition, as well as initiatives to improve social protection to counteract thedecline of life expectancy in the area. Economic and Business Co-operation, trade and investment promotion: The objectives are: -to encourage in each partner country the development of a legal and administrative framework that is conducive to business development; -removing barriers to trade and investment, notable through the mechanisms of the Europe Agreements (Baltic States and Poland) and the Partnership Cooperation Agreement (Russia) and support of Russia's accession to he WTO; -promoting the development of policies that support entrepreneurship; -enhancing cross-border regional cooperation between companies. Research and technological development: Both the JRC and the Research DG of the Commission carried out several activities relevant to the Northern dimension recently. Special attention was paid to Arctic themes, soil protection and mapping, forest monitoring and natural resources. The 6th Framework Programme for RTD foresees specific measures in support of international cooperation, including with Russia and the Candidate countries. Justice and Home Affairs: Russia, Poland and the Baltic States all face the fight against organised crime, terrorism, trafficking in women and drugs. The control of external frontiers and respect for international norms in the fields of asylum and immigration brings an added dimension. The Russian Oblast of Kalingrad presents particular challenges. Some 50% of the region's population live below the poverty line with real unemployment being an average 25% across the Oblast. The region's military status plays a key role in Kalingrad's situation. Kalingrad is facing a number of serious security problems that should be urgently addressed. More attention is being paid to migration issues and to the financing of border crossings at the frontier of the enlarged EU. The most important JHA progress in the area is taking place in the candidate countries, including their integration into the international judicial cooperation regime. Cross-border cooperation: The development of zones of economic integration is of particular interest for the Baltic Sea Region. The report concludes that much remains to be done. It is important to strengthen the coordination and the synergies between the EU's and other actors' projects.

The Union's policies: a Northern dimension, Russia and Baltic countries. Vienna European Council

1998/2227(COS) - 23/12/2003 - Follow-up document

The 2003 Progress Report is an overview of the Commission's implementation of the Northern Dimension Action Plan. It covers the period from summer 2002 to autumn 2003. As the report notes, the most important event to have taken place during this period was the conclusion of EU accession negotiations with Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland in 2002. Over the last few months the EU has continued to offer financial support totalling some EUR 1 440 million to these countries. It was also during this period that the second Northern Dimension Action Plan was authorised by the European Council in October 2003 thus allowing for an uninterrupted continuation of work so far completed. The Report notes that there has been a successful continuation of dialogue between the European Commission and Russia resulting in, inter alia, the signing OF a facilitated transit regime to and from Kaliningrad through the EU as well as a EUR 25 million programme for Kaliningrad under the 2004-06 Tacis programme. As well as bi-lateral negotiations, the Commission has continued to co-operate with interested regional bodies such as the CBSS Task Force on Organised Crime and Communicable Diseases. In terms of "Priority Sectors" the Commission notes progress in areas such as business friendly legislation, the removal of barriers to trade and investment, the promotion of policies for entrepreneurship and the European Charter for Small Enterprises. Energy undoubtedly plays an important part in any discussion between the EU and those countries covered by the Northern Dimension Action Plan. As such the Commission has maintained vital and on-going Energy talks with Russia and central and eastern European countries. Areas of common interest have been identified and include the development of the Shtokman field, the inter-connection of the electricity grids, the northern trans-European gas pipeline and the Yamal European pipeline. Similarly, the European Commission has relied on the Northern Dimension Action Plan as a useful platform for launching and initiating contact on other areas of common interest not least in the field of Transport (pan-European corridors/maritime safety), Telecommunications (Northern eDimention Action Plan), Scientific Research and Public Health. The Report also notes useful and positive progress in Environmental policy areas particularly as far as Nuclear Safety is concerned. Lithuania, for example, has committed itself to closing down Unit 1 of the Ignalia NPP before 2005 and of Unit 2 by 31 December 2009. Relevant INTERREG programmes are reviewed and the introduction of "Neighbourhood Programmes" aired. The Commission's Communication on neighbourhood programmes was adopted in March 2003 with the specific aim of creating neighbourhood instruments. To conclude, from a political point of view, the most important events to have taken place in the period under review would be the signing of the accession agreements with the candidate countries as well as the adoption of the Second Northern Dimension Action Plan, set to come into force on 1 January 2004. The implementation of the second Northern Dimension Action Plan is expected to benefit from the introduction of the Neighbourhood programme. As the Report notes, the political achievements and the positive results obtained by concrete co-operation activities should lay encouraging foundations for the challenging period to come after 1 May 2004.