

STATEMENT

On the Development of Co-operation between the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council

The Baltic Assembly,

greatly appreciating the Nordic countries' support for regaining the Baltic States' independence and their integration into the European Union, the proposal by the Conservative Group of the Nordic Council of 27 June 2000 to extend an invitation for the Baltic States to join the Nordic Council, and the survey on the further development of the Northern region carried out by the working group of the Nordic Council of Ministers which emphasises the need to intensify co-operation with the Baltic States;

noting the existing co-operation between the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council, the results of the 3rd Joint Meeting and the fact that in the enlarged European Union Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, together with the Nordic countries, will logically constitute a single region based not only on geographical closeness but also on common values and noting the need for small countries to co-operate within the European Union and other international organisations;

stressing that the Baltic States' membership in the Nordic Council is an issue of an immediate agenda,

emphasises that the Baltic Assembly is interested in further expansion and intensification of co-operation with the Nordic Council and in participation in Northern Dimension projects by

- organising joint conferences on issues relevant for the region;
- expressing a common stand of the eight countries of the region at international forums;
- forming joint standing committees;
- promoting co-operation between the committees of the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council;
- actively participating in the working groups of the Nordic Council;
- vitalising contacts between political party groups,

as well as by facilitating and supporting

- Nordic countries' investment in the Baltic States,
- people-to-people contacts among the eight countries of the region,
- co-operation of local governments,
- co-operation of non-governmental and civic society organisations,
- development of tourism,
- creation of a common educational space of the Baltic and Nordic countries; and

calls on the Nordic Council to facilitate rapprochement of the Baltic States with the Nordic countries by admitting the Baltic States to those Nordic co-operation institutions where their participation is already possible.

2 June 2001, Riga