

**JOINT STATEMENT by the Baltic Assembly Presidium and
the Nordic Council Presidium**

The Presidiums of the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council have today adopted a joint working plan for the year 2006. They agreed, among other things, to closely follow the development of the project of constructing a gas pipeline on the seabed of the Baltic Sea, particularly what concerns its possible impacts on the marine environment.

The Presidiums are of the opinion that it is of vital importance that a start of an infrastructural project of this size must be preceded by a thorough and open environmental impact analysis, in order to avoid a routing and construction that disrupts the sensitive ecosystem of the Baltic Sea.

The Presidiums therefore welcome that the gas pipeline project is brought up in the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) for review in accordance with the provisions in the Espoo Convention. The Presidiums expect that all possible steps will be taken to protect the Baltic Sea from environmental damage.

Tallinn,

26 November 2005