

# DENMARK AND THE NORTHERN DIMENSION

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## 1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

This country study consists of three parts<sup>1</sup>. First some introductory observations aiming at placing the Northern dimension concept in a broader context. Secondly, a description of the Danish participation in Baltic sea- activities and programs. Thirdly, an overview of the official Danish position.

The Baltic Sea area and the Northern part of Europe is certainly among the regions in the world having the highest number of co-operative international and transnational organisations. Probably it has the number one position.

The organisations cover practically all sectors and all levels. There are political, economic, military, societal, technical, and cultural organisations, representing high as well as low politics, soft as well as hard security issues. They embody political summits on the highest level, organisations between cities in the area, co-operative arrangement among choirs.

Why is this so? This phenomenon cannot primarily be explained as an expression of a Nordic-small-state political tradition. We have to look for broader, structural reasons. We may state, that we have to do with entirely new geo-political realities in comparison to the cold war period. During the cold war, dimensions of geographical distance, neighbourhood, and vicinity between the individual countries had rather low priority. The more or less impenetrable iron curtain was a physical and political fact, which contributed to a simplistic, bipolar geopolitical identity: East-West. Due to the strange mixture in Northern Europe of allied countries (NATO and the Warsaw Pact), neutral countries (West as well as East-oriented), and the heavy presence of one of the superpowers; the USSR, there were constant political attempts to blur the existence of an iron curtain in Northern Europe. For example: the Soviet Union called for a Baltic Sea of Peace and the Nordic countries for a "Nordic Low-tension-area". Nevertheless, the division of Europe played a decisive role also in this area.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is a draft for a TEPSA-project on the "Northern Dimension". Part of the project is Country Studies taking point of departure in a series of questions to the general "Northern Dimension" policy of the individual EU-countries. I am indebted to Christian Sparrevohn, MA, for research, for preparing part of the basic text, and for editing work.

With the end of the cold war, the end of the Soviet empire, and the unification of Germany Northern Europe changed completely. Neighbourhood, vicinity, borders, geographical closeness, and distance suddenly counted again. Trans-border activities became normal: goods, people, services, culture, crime, ideas (e.g. human rights, democracy etc.). In this way, the area became a regular, coherent geographical region.

But, this coherent geopolitical region is characterised by a specific feature: there are no natural centres, no natural dominating country or unit in the region itself: there are, however, two centres positioned outside the region namely in economic-political terms: Brussels (the European Union) and in security-policy terms: Washington (the United States as the undisputed leader of NATO). The basic fact is that after the cold war, Northern Europe including the Baltic Sea area has been “EU-ized” (including Russia with the EU-Russia partnership agreement) and at the same time “NATO-ized” (including Russia with the NATO-Russia Council (JPC, Joint Permanent Council) and the neutral and Baltic countries, all members of Partnership for Peace and Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council).

In order fully to understand the concept of the Northern Dimension, it may be relevant to ask: who creates and dissolves regions?

Region-building and region-fragmentation is closely attached to geographical and cultural factors. But, as it is demonstrated in the present case of Northern Europe (incl. the Baltic Sea area) these factors are necessary but not sufficient preconditions. Region-building is dependent on the dominant organisation of the world. With the disappearance of bipolarity and the transformation to a new international structure with one superpower - a situation which could be labelled unipolarity - Europe for example has evolved into one super-region, a Europe which formerly was divided into two regions. This can simply be expressed in the claim that the US is now a European power and not as before a Western European Power. The preconditions for “a Europe whole and free” seem to be an all-European US-“overlay”. Equally, the new US role in Europe has now resulted in a Europe divided into three sub-regions: a southern Europe attached to the Mediterranean area, a Northern Europe attached to the Baltic sea including the Northern Atlantic - and thirdly: the new coherent middle belt, from France, over Germany, Poland, and Ukraine to Russia.

In this connection it is worthwhile emphasising that the United States seems more engaged in northern Europe than ever before in history. The US is a very active observer in practically all regional political organisations and has established valuable organisational frameworks like the US- Baltic charter, and the American North-eastern European Initiative. So in this way, the United States is not only a European power but also a marked Northern European power.

This new region-building is one of the important factors in the concept of the Northern dimension. Also, it plays a critical role in the development of the general Danish foreign policy. But how may the general Danish attitude towards the Northern dimension in a broader perspective be characterised?

## 2. THE NORTHERN DIMENSION: A GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The following assessments are based on the original Finnish initiative. The Northern Dimension, however, is now EU-policy. The European Council in Vienna has constructed a firm foundation for the further development of the Union's Northern Dimension policies. Finland's initiative has become that of the European Council and the Commission.

The general view is that the values behind and content of the original Finnish concept of the "Northern Dimension" are all shared by Denmark, which has been advocating and implementing many of the same ideas in different fora. Yet the term "the Northern Dimension" is still absent from the Danish national debate on the European Union as well as the discourse on Baltic Sea involvement. Though both these areas are discussed and treated by a broad range of political, economical, and societal actors, the link between them is rarely mentioned outside the circles of policy makers and social scientists. Not many Danes have heard of the "Northern Dimension"; the phrase has not surfaced in the general political debate yet, a fact that can be explained partly by the original broad and somewhat abstract nature of the Finnish proposal which made it difficult to evaluate and discuss. The lack of concrete substance does not provide the whole explanation, however. At least as hindering for general awareness of the concept is the fact that Danish authorities, companies, and individuals are already involved in the region in a vast range of bilateral and multilateral initiatives appearing to cover the same areas of co-operation and development as the "Northern Dimension". To many, it is simply not clear what innovation the concept provides. Isolated, the "Northern Dimension"-concept can be seen as a Finnish agenda-setting strategy with the aim of placing the specific Finnish geopolitical position in a broader European context avoiding, however, an emergence of what could be perceived as a co-ordinated Nordic-centric policy inside the EU. The fact that the Northern Dimension has now become part of the general EU-policy is an indication of wise, clever, and well planned, long-term Finnish policy.

On a more official level, the Danish foreign service sees great opportunities in an increased emphasis on the "Northern Dimension" in the European Union, especially if it builds on existing structures and expertise in the region. If the EU could assume a co-ordinating role of the many national and institutional policies already being implemented, it might well

improve the efficiency of the efforts and thereby strengthen security and prosperity of Northern Europe. Additionally, a more active role by the EU could mean the successful undertaking of co-operative projects that the current institutions, active in the region are too weak to handle alone and would result in increased recognition by the southern member countries of the importance of the region. Further, it could function as a strategic bargaining chip in the general, broad EU-policy-game, vis-à-vis the Barcelona process which deals with the Mediterranean dimension of the EU.

In the following sections, the reasons for the lacking presence of the Northern Dimension in the general Danish political debate will be explained through the treatment of the existing Danish activities in the Baltic Sea Area. Afterwards, I will turn to the *official* Danish position on the “Northern Dimension” both in terms of a general, broad description and in the shape of a schematic presentation of the answers to a questionnaire. This section is based on extensive interviews conducted with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This dual approach attempts to provide a solid understanding of the Danish position while making cross-country comparisons possible.

### 3. DENMARK AND THE BALTIC SEA AREA

A new activism emerged in Danish foreign policy with the end of the Cold War. During an international shift in security focus from hard to soft, Denmark found that its capabilities matched the new challenges much better than the old. A new policy, *active internationalism*, was proclaimed in April 1989 by the Foreign Minister, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen. A Government Commission had examined and redefined the Danish Foreign Service to match the new international situation. The recommendations were that Denmark should be more proactive, focus more on international globalization and base its foreign policy on a longer-term strategic perspective. This broke with a tradition of muted Danish diplomacy that had been shaped by the Danish military defeats in the 19th century and been emphasised after the Second World War. Danish geopolitical vulnerability serving as a barrier for proactivism disappeared when the Berlin Wall was torn down, indicating the end of bipolarity. Denmark’s re-establishment of diplomatic relations as one of the first Western countries with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in 1991 marked a substantial change and implicated the beginning of a unique position for the Baltic countries in Danish foreign policy.

Bilaterally and through the regional organisations (the already existing and the many that were created), Denmark took a great responsibility upon itself in order to assist the former East Bloc countries in general and especially the three Baltic countries. With the

aim of helping these countries to achieve integration and security in Europe in political, economic, societal, and military terms, Denmark participated in a vast range of initiatives.

*Bilaterally*, the new internationalism has led to a multitude of projects. On the most local level, the National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark has reported a rapid growth in the number of “friendship city”-partnerships between Danish cities and countries near the Baltic Sea. Additionally, a significant number of Danish cities are involved in projects in the former Soviet Union in sectors such as energy, environment, and education. In the period 1992-1996, Danish counties were involved in 140 projects in the former Soviet Union and Poland mainly within the areas of education, administration, and social services. The local levels have spearheaded a substantial Danish social systems export to these countries.

On a larger scale, the central levels of the Danish political system are involved in numerous initiatives. Denmark was among the first countries in Europe to initiate defence co-operation with the Central- and Eastern European countries, and was one of the driving forces behind the creation of BALTBAT; a peacekeeping unit with soldiers from the three Baltic countries, trained and equipped by a number of Western European states. Denmark has also assisted the Baltic countries in upgrading their defence for Partnership for Peace and eventually NATO-membership. With Germany and Poland, Denmark formulated a tripartite agreement in 1995 aiming at preparing the Polish forces for NATO. A German/Polish/Danish multinational NATO corps will be established in 1999, each country contributing one division. The Baltic Sea divisions of the three countries are involved in close co-operation and joint military training. Additionally, Denmark has supported the establishment of BALTRON (a common naval force) and BALTNET (a common military surveillance and intelligence system). The collective experience from these projects has served as an example to the Central Asian republics, which are currently forming a CENTRASBAT, and has inspired dialogue concerning the establishment of similar structures all over Central and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the Royal Danish Army and Navy Academies train several Baltic cadets each year, and is one of driving forces behind the Baltic Defence College (BALTDEFCOL) in Tartu which has a Danish chief. Denmark is currently involved in approximately 250 distinct defence projects in the Baltic Sea Area.

On softer security issues, Denmark has been similarly active in aiding and guiding the Central and Eastern European countries. The list of projects is quite overwhelming and include police co-operation, export of the Danish taxation system to Poland and the Baltic countries, substantial aid to ease the Former Soviet Republics’ pollution problems, the initiating of academic networks to exchange scholars and students (named “Eurofaculty”), agricultural assistance to upgrade the methods and technology in the Baltic countries, the

opening of a cultural institute in Riga, extensive education of Baltic and Russian teachers on all levels, and economic aid to bolster the democratic efforts of the new political systems. The Kaliningrad area has been selected for specific priority. Intensive efforts are conducted to establish a Danish-Russian action plan for the area. Denmark is the bilateral donor that contributes the most to the Baltic countries both in absolute and relative terms. To this should be added all the efforts to establish trade connections between Denmark and the new markets. These include government initiatives to strengthen the commercial sectors of the Baltic Sea countries as well as the expansions of private Danish companies that are attracted by an inexpensive labour force and the need for Western know-how. A growing part of the Danish foreign trade is with Poland, Russia and the Baltic countries.

*Multilaterally*, Denmark has played an active role in the large number of regional organisations existing in the Northern and Baltic regions. A high water mark for the Danish involvement was 1997-1998 when Denmark chaired the Council of Baltic Sea States. CBSS was founded upon Danish and German initiative in 1992 and has become one of the leading exponents for economical, political and cultural co-operation in the region. On the local level, Danish cities are active in the Union of Baltic Cities, Danish counties in The Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation and the Danish island Bornholm in the Baltic Sea Islands, modestly abbreviated B-7. To this should be added the Baltic Ring (a vision on a common energy and electricity network), HELCOM (the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission), the Baltic Sea Alliance, as well as the older organisations of the Nordic Council and the institutions related to the Barents Co-operation that have all redefined their roles to initiate dialogue with Russia. Additionally, Denmark has worked actively in the EU and NATO to prepare both organisations and applicants for expansion and has invited Baltic soldiers to participate fully and integrally in Danish contributions to UN peacekeeping operations. Denmark was the first country to extend such an invitation.

The list of Danish initiatives and affiliations in the region covered by “the Nordic Dimension” provides an impression of the intensity of existing efforts, as well as the multilateral policy channels already in place. A very tight institutional network that appears to cover even the broadest definition of security and development is established. Danish mass media has produced a general awareness of the work already taking place in the region, as well as of the official Danish political ambitions regarding the active involvement of the Baltic countries in the Western organisations.

Seen against this background, it is not surprising that the Finnish initiative has difficulties in gaining ground in the general Danish debate. Though most Danish politicians and participants in the public debate support all the values behind and the content of the Finnish proposal, they are approaching a point of saturation and do not necessarily see

anything new or different about the “Northern Dimension”. This will be a key challenge to the concept in Denmark and probably elsewhere in the region. It will have to present itself as truly unique in order to receive much attention in the public debate. So far, it has not succeeded in doing so.

Before outlining the specific Danish position on the Northern Dimension, a brief general survey on Danish Security policy in terms of Russia, “Norden”, and the Baltic Sea Area will be presented.

#### 4. DANISH SECURITY POLICY IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

The Northern Dimension is not least about Russia. In regard to Russia, Denmark as the spokesman for the Baltic States at least concerning NATO-membership has on the one hand been the advocate of a quite demanding line and on the other hand pursued a friendship and co-operation seeking policy.

Denmark does not conceive Russia as a direct security threat, at least not in the short run. The recent National Danish Defence Commission has stated in its report from 1998 that there will be no direct conventional military threat to Denmark in the next 10 years. Likewise it can be observed that Russia is reducing its military capabilities in the North-Western part of the country with approximately 50%.

The Danish perception of her relations to Russia is best described as a partnership, though a partnership that sometimes has to be treated with caution. This caution is not due to fear of aggression towards Denmark, its allies, or the Baltic States for that matter. Denmark’s main objective is to prevent the relations between Russia and the West from deteriorating or in the worst case returning to the Cold War climate. This means that the Danish security risks in regard to Russia have to be seen in a longer perspective. The perceived risk is instability not aggression.

The logic behind Danish policy in regard to Russia is that by giving her a role and a say in the international community and helping her becoming stable domestically, the perspectives for friendly, open, and reliable relations are better.

This implies that Denmark on the one hand pursues a stabilisation of the relationship with Russia. On the other hand, Denmark would not go too far in compromising her

principles in order to uphold the good climate. Examples are the Danish activist stand on the Baltic question, the enlargement of NATO, and the Kosovo conflict.

Danish security policy is characterised by an active, influence seeking and sometimes quite self-assured position. This goes not least for relations with Russia. This position is partly explained by Denmark's role in the context of NATO. In this forum, Denmark has changed its position from being a - sometimes quite obstinate – free rider in the 1980's to being an active participant with a co-operative policy, always quite in line with the American opinion in the 1990's. This position gives Denmark quite some freedom of action.

This means that security in the Baltic sea area according to the Danish general point of view is first of all taken care of by NATO. This policy is also supported by the population. While during the cold war often less than half of the population was supportive of NATO, now - when no military threat exists- up to 80% is strongly for continued membership of NATO. This attitude did not change during the NATO war in Kosovo when Denmark was heavily engaged, participating with almost as many fighter planes as Germany. During the war, Denmark ranked highest in the opinion polls among the European countries in terms of percentage of the population supporting the Kosovo-action.

Historically, Danish foreign policy has been characterised by five more or less competing security projects: 1. a universalistic project, supporting international security, law and order, primarily through UN, 2. an Atlantic project, emphasising the role of NATO and the United States also due to the fact that Greenland attached to the American continent belongs to Denmark, 3. an all-European project, underscoring the aim of a united Europe without dividing lines, an aim also promoted during the cold war, 4. a Western European project, primarily devoted to economy, namely the EEC, and finally 5. a Nordic project based on the Nordic identity and culture.

In the 90's, these in part competing project are now converging. This is due to the new international system with only one superpower, emerging after the end of the cold war. The system change has permitted realignment, primarily resulting in a general, though uneven flocking security-wise around the sole superpower. It promotes further regionalization and integration, and it provides new challenges for small states like Denmark.

Due to the enlargement of the EU and NATO, the All-European project now incorporates the Western European project. The same goes for the Nordic project, which is dwarfed after the Swedish and Finnish membership.



The Nordic co-operation still exists, but it has become overshadowed by European integration and the new region-building around the Baltic sea. In this new region, the centres are not found inside the sub-region. They are outside Brussels and Washington. And in this new regional competition between the Nordic countries is the rule. Evidently co-operative frameworks are still at work but the new regional and international structure has given impetus to a Nordic battlefield incorporating issue areas such as security policy, economics, and military matters.

As concerns the Atlantic project, this is now in the process of being combined with the European, due to the giving up of the vision of a fully independent European defence (this vision is now the vision of possible European humanitarian interventions) and emphasis on the European pillar inside NATO. So the Danish perspective is now more or less one project – a Euro-Atlantic project which retains close ties to the universalistic vision.

Based on these developments, the challenges for Danish security policy are increasing, the internal contradictions, however, reduced Denmark can look upon a project like the Northern Dimension as part of a new regionalism which is in accordance with the broad Danish Euro-Atlantic security project.

## 5. THE DANISH POSITION ON THE NORTHERN DIMENSION

Among the relevant Danish policy makers, the Finnish proposal has been greeted as a possible way of expanding EU's interest in the region. By involving more countries than those belonging to the region itself, the Finnish proposal might pave the road for a more comprehensive Western involvement in the Baltic countries, Russia, and Poland. The issues of environment, nuclear security, energy, international crime, human rights etc. are not just the concern of the Nordic countries, they are just as relevant to the Central and Southern European countries and consequently it makes sense to involve these states in the relevant policy decisions. Furthermore, most of the East European countries covered by the "Nordic Dimension" are either short list candidates to EU-membership or on the brink of becoming so. By alleviating some of the problems that these applicants face, the EU avoids the risk of "importing" them into its political and economic structures, and thus avoids later tensions between old and new members.

The three other main reasons for Danish support of the "Northern Dimension" are the implicit values in the proposal, the pivotal focus on Russia, and the need for an entity that can co-ordinate existing efforts in the region.

First, the value foundation of the "Northern Dimension" is virtually identical to the platform that Denmark and probably the other Nordic countries base their Baltic Sea-

policy upon. The Danish attitude is, that co-operation is about much more than aid though, of course, in recent years the transfer of support between Northwest and Northeast has been quite uni-directional. Behind the seemingly abundant number of organisations and discussion fora in the area is the wish to establish a broad political dialogue between the countries in Northern Europe, in an attempt to overcome the former contrasting norms and values of the bipolar world, and to establish and confirm the commonality of interests on a wide range of issues. Through this partnership, softer definitions of security are established as key elements in the relations between states, which not only reduces the risk of military tensions and political misunderstandings, but also make it possible for the countries to discuss many different issues at once and in conjunction. The broad nature of the co-operation also maximises the positive outcome of specific initiatives. For example, money for improvement of the environment in Poland will be less efficiently used if the donor does not understand the nuances of the Polish political structure or industrial composition - and is virtually useless if the necessary trust has not been built between the donor and receiver, essential to the implementation and evaluation of the aid program. The establishment of a political dialogue thus becomes a goal in itself, as well as a necessary tool in ensuring the success of specific projects. The "Northern Dimension"-proposal embraces these thoughts, through its focus on a broad security concept, its aim of establishing of a soft security-region, and its emphasis on the importance of a candid dialogue between the former East and West, and between all relevant political actors in the area.

Second, the "Northern Dimension"-proposal appears to see Russia as a potential ally rather than as an adversary. Though this might seem logical considering the new general partnership security-structure in Europe and Russia's size and geopolitical importance, it is in fact a complicated issue. Russia is wary of the rapid and accelerating expansion of NATO though it is certainly much more at ease with the enlargement of EU than NATO is as yet. Russian concern about the future level of activity of WEU or an EU taking over the tasks of the WEU may be expected in the future. Add to this a fear of isolation from the European economic and political institutions, having considerably more influence than the OSCE which Russia has traditionally championed. While Russia is primarily aiming at close co-operation with the EU, the Central and Eastern European states have demonstrated a remarkable talent to adapt to their new situation and many of them have met the standards for preliminary membership negotiations as outlined in the Copenhagen Criteria. Not admitting them under these circumstances could reduce the credibility of the Union. But the applicants - especially Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - find themselves in a security situation that cannot be seen as isolated from Russia. CBSS and many of the other regional organisations have welcomed close Russian co-operation, and Denmark seeks to involve Russia in bilateral projects. The "Northern Dimension" can ease this attempt in two ways. First, by clearly indicating that the WEU or an EU taking over WEU-tasks is not an intrusive element to West European policy in Eastern Europe. The emphasis on soft security issues contribute to reducing Russian tension. Second, the

“Northern Dimension” seems to see a constructive, co-ordinated dialogue as a foreign policy goal in itself. The dialogue does not mean that Russia has a veto privilege in the EU, nor that the EU countries should invite Russia to the table when EU foreign policy is initially discussed. But when it comes to European security, Russia is still an indispensable country and its concerns should be heard.

Third, Denmark acknowledges that there is a need for co-ordination of the many efforts in the region and that the EU through the “Northern Dimension” might serve this purpose. There are several compelling reasons for this:

*To avoid rivalry:* political scientists have hinted at a certain rivalry between the Nordic countries. Allegedly, they compete on who can contribute the most and possibly gain influence in the domestic politics of the Baltic countries especially. Such a competition can be a good thing if it results in larger funding to the receiving countries. But if it means that money is wasted on prestige projects or that there are damaging political agendas behind the donations there might be a need for co-ordination in order to ensure the largest possible benefits for the Central and East European countries.

*To reduce inefficiency:* there is inefficiency due to simple unawareness of what other organisations and states are doing - work is occasionally done in duplicate or not at all, because one institution believes that another will see to it. Co-ordination is relatively tight within the country borders but very complicated internationally and between semi-closed organisations.

*To help form partnerships:* some tasks are too complicated to handle by a single country or organisation. They must be lifted by partnerships possible involving public and private institutions from several countries. Though there are many good examples of how this can be done successfully, the tasks of finding potential partners and co-ordinating the efforts are often difficult to the individual entity. Furthermore, if the co-ordination is done by the EU, it will substantially expand the number of countries that can participate in such programs or encourage their companies to do so. The EU already has relevant experience through its representation in many of the regional organisations and programs such as PHARE.

Though these are convincing arguments for greater EU-involvement in the region, the co-ordination responsibility will come with some difficulties. First, in order to ensure member support for the idea it is crucial that the “Northern Dimension” does not lead to increased bureaucracy or demand for funding. This would greatly reduce its appeal in Denmark and probably other member states. Second, EU should respect the local

expertise in the region without being submissive to it in its decisions. And finally, the EU must learn how to handle two difficult balancing acts. The first is between the Northern countries that are currently most active in the region and the Southern countries that will demand real influence if the EU is to represent them in this matter. The other is between EU and Russia that will have to find a new equilibrium in their relationship if the “Northern Dimension” is fully implemented. How Russia can be involved more directly is still difficult to say, but the Finnish proposals of extended co-operation on single issues could turn out to be a fruitful approach, which would “spill off” to some of the more sensitive areas of concern.

Denmark only sees a few clouds on the otherwise bright “Northern Dimension”-horizon. First, though it has been promoted by Finland, the idea is really the product of a strong Nordic tradition established after the end of the Cold War. If the remainder of the EU perceives the proposal as merely a Finnish attempt to escape its own particular security situation (bordering Russia, outside NATO), there would be a risk that it will be dismissed as pure politics without policy. Due to the wise presentation of the initiative this has, however, not become the case.

Second, it is important to find ways of involving the western non-EU-members. Though Iceland and Norway have not been as prolific after the Cold War as Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany, they still share many of the same security concerns and possess resources and expertise which they are willing to use in addressing these. The risk is that if the “Northern Dimension” becomes too EU-centric, these valuable partners will not be included in the work. Consequently, the regional organisations that include these countries most importantly the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and the Nordic Council could be integrated in the EU policy in the area. It is still too early to say how this can be done, without involving some of the other points of disagreement between the EU and the countries outside and without taking influence away from the southern member countries. The practical attempts to widen the Northern Dimension have, however, been promising.

Third, though Denmark sees Northern Europe as an area of great importance, other parts of the former east-west division are important as well. It is not feasible that the “Northern Dimension” becomes synonymous with EU’s foreign policy and that areas such as Balkan, Yugoslavia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Turkey are ignored. It will be possible to apply experiences made in one part of Europe to the others; the Nordic members should be focused on contributing to this work as well. Not just because, by analogy the developments in these parts will matter to Northern Europe, but also because it will greatly hurt the chances of implementing the “Northern Dimension” if the Nordic countries neglect the rest of Europe. This problem also seems, however, to be in the process of being solved.

## 6. CONCLUSION

As should be clear by now, Denmark strongly supports the Finnish proposal of a more visible “Northern Dimension” in the EU. Though the concept is still somewhat fuzzy, it appears to be based on the principles that Denmark and other Nordic countries have promoted in the region throughout the decade. This includes some issues that are not always considered as part of soft security, such as human rights and standards of social policy. The “Northern Dimension” could integrate seamlessly into the EU-enlargement plans, and is likely to greatly reduce the potential problems associated with it.

Despite the challenges that will appear with the implementation of the Finnish proposal, Denmark believes that the European Union is well prepared to meet the challenges and appear truly unified in the Northern region. If EU is successful, it will not only increase the prosperity and security of the Central and East European countries more than the combined member countries are doing today, it will also help its current members through the building of new markets and the establishment of a new security agenda that helps ease a variety of potential problems from market failures and environmental disasters to civil war and streams of refugees before they reach Western Europe. Seen from a birds eye perspective, a successful and coherent policy for the Northern region could constitute a major foreign policy victory for the EU and serve as a brilliant example of the feasibility and credibility of the CFSP. The “Northern Dimension” could form precedence for a more integrated “Southern Dimension” than is the case today. It has, however, to be emphasised that it is difficult to compare the two EU-“dimensions” directly as the Northern and Southern projects do not belong to the same category. The collective experience would prove useful well beyond the Baltic Sea and Arctic areas and perhaps suggest co-operative models for countries such as Ukraine, Moldavia, and Albania.

At the very least, Denmark welcomes the Finnish initiative because it is bound to create more attention to and appreciation of the special challenges and opportunities that the Northern region contain today. The Northern Dimension is now EU-policy. The problem is how to implement it. This process will presuppose a debate on the policy maker levels of the different member countries. There is a possibility that this discussion will eventually expand and emerge in the general political debates as well. Currently, this is not the case in Denmark but when the “Northern Dimension” assumes a more substantive and novel shape it will probably receive more attention outside the circles of diplomats and political scientists.

*Answering the TEPSA-questionnaire on “the Northern Dimension”*

Question	Answer
1.a: Which countries are seen as relevant?	The “Northern Dimension” is somewhat unclear on this matter; does it include all of the Baltic Sea Area and all Arctic countries? At the very least, the concept should encompass the Baltic countries, Russia and Scandinavia.
1.b: Which problems/challenges are perceived?	The problems and challenges belonging to the realm of soft security: energy policy, cultural policy, environmental policy, economic co-operation, judicial co-operation, social policy, cultural exchange etc.
1.c: How do you evaluate your country’s policy towards the Northern Dimension?	Denmark is a strong supporter of the Northern Dimension, which has been indicated by Denmark’s strong profile on many of the same issues during the period it held the chair of the Council of Baltic Sea States, as well as the numerous Danish initiatives on a bilateral basis ever since the end of the Cold War.
2: Please rank the importance of the Northern region for your country - especially in the EU context - and state the reasons for your evaluation	Denmark perceives the Northern region as important in the EU context. Placed in the middle of the region, many of Denmark’s security concerns are located here, making it a high priority. Though there are already many sub-regional organisations involved in the region, Denmark welcomes EU participation.
3: How is Russia seen as an actor in the Northern dimension of Europe by the EU/CFSP elite of your country?	Russia is a pivotal actor in the region, and a country of simultaneously great opportunities and some concern. Russia must effectively be involved in Europe, not least because of the high priority of EU expansion, which should involve the Baltic countries.

4.a: How is the EU affected by the developments in the North; does the EU have a comparative advantage in dealing with these?	EU is already involved in the region, through its seat at the Council of Baltic Sea States and thus has a clear knowledge of the regions and its concerns. It has the capacity to co-ordinate the many local initiatives and should base itself on the existing structures. However, it can not do so alone; since the EU includes countries outside the Northern region, it must find a way to balance local expertise with the participation of all EU countries.
4.b: Should the EU-priority placed on this region be high, medium or low?	High, as in many other areas.
4.c: What is or should be the substance of EU policies?	Rapid enlargement, including the acceptance of Latvia and Lithuania should be a very high priority. It will only be possible to enlarge EU, if the Baltic states are able to make necessary changes themselves, and if an open and constructive dialogue with Russia is maintained. Making the Northern Dimension a topic of importance in the EU should help achieve both of these goals.
4.d: What are or should be the instruments of EU policy?	The use of all regional organisations, bilateral connections and EU's own political influence. The Finnish proposal wisely indicates that there should be no need for additional funding or bureaucracy. Denmark fully supports this. Since "The Northern Dimension" is not about military security, the EU should abstain from using WEU as a policy instrument in this matter. This is not a defence issue.
4.e: To which extent should the EU involve Russia when dealing with its Northern dimension?	Russia is a natural part of the Northern dimension and should, consequently, have a high priority and be involved in the dialogue as well as a factor in the considerations. With this in mind, EU should, however, first determine its own agenda and involve Russia afterwards.
5.a: Perception of the role of Sweden, Denmark and Finland in the EU?	No desire to establish a common bloc.

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<p>5.b: Do the non-aligned countries further or hamper the development of the CFSP including defence?</p>	<p>This depends on the policy situation at hand.</p>
<p>5.c: Are there other major interests that need to be balanced?</p>	<p>The issues of human rights, transnational crime, the stability of nuclear power plants in the region and social welfare are all very relevant. Through the Copenhagen criteria, those issues have been demanded improved by several of the member countries, adding to the importance of rapid expansion.</p>
<p>5.d: Will the problems in the Baltic Sea region strengthen or weaken the EU's role as a regional power and a global player/security actor?</p>	<p>This depends on how well the EU does in lifting the challenges. If the EU, through expansion and development is successful in solving the variety of problems, the region faces, it will emerge as stronger and more coherent. A prerequisite of the expansion, however, is an open and productive dialogue with Russia. The Northern Dimension and other regional initiatives, as stated above, can potentially secure a positive outcome.</p>
<p>6.a: What should the Northern countries do to climb higher on the list of priorities?</p>	<p>A frank discussion of issues relating to the soft security issues of the region, and their importance for the rest of EU, can help create awareness about the common nature of security concerns. The Northern Dimension-discussion is helpful in this respect, as long as the Northern countries do not bring it up disproportionately.</p>
<p>6.b: How do you perceive the future of this region on the overall map of the EU's interests?</p>	<p>Northern Europe will be increasingly important at the pace of EU expansion. As Poland, Estonia and potentially other Baltic Sea countries join the EU, the Northern Dimension and the issues that relate to it, will become more visible.</p>

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6.c: What should your country do?

Denmark will continue to play an active and engaged role in the Council of Baltic Sea States, the Barents Sea Council and bilateral arrangements in numerous policy areas.

7: Any additional points?

The Danish government is still waiting for the final version of the Finnish suggestion and is therefore still not quite clear on the exact shape and content of “The Northern Dimension”. Based on the Finnish indications so far, Denmark is very positive towards the initiative, which consists mainly of elements Denmark already champions in other contexts. One concern could be that the Northern Dimension-debate is not able to evolve beyond the goal stating phase. Another is that attention is taken from other important issues and areas, such as Moldavia and Ukraine. On the positive side, a successful Northern project holds great exemplary potential that can be used to meet the challenges in Central and Southern Europe.

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