



## Nordic-Baltic cooperation (NB8)

Created: 2014.12.09 / Updated: 2022.01.03 16:25



NB8 (Nordic - Baltic Eight) is an informal (non-institutionalized) regional co-operation format that includes Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, and Sweden. In December 1990, the first Nordic and Baltic Foreign Ministers' meeting was held in Copenhagen and gave impetus for the format. Named as 5+3 in the beginning of cooperation (five Nordic countries plus three Baltic States) in 1992, the format later changed its name and scope of cooperation. During the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Baltic States and Nordic Countries on 30 August 2000, it was agreed to rename the format to NB8.

Since the double EU and NATO enlargement in 2004, where the three Baltic States became members of both organizations, the NB8 cooperation has become closer and its content evolved. What started as a very active support by the Nordic countries to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to consolidate their newly regained independence, gradually grew into a cooperation among equal partners and became an example of regional integration. The format is unique as it includes both members and non-members of the EU (Norway and Iceland) and NATO (Finland and Sweden). In 2010, at the initiative of the Baltics, the Nordic and the Baltic Foreign ministers decided to establish a Nordic-Baltic "wise-men" group to look into ways to strengthen the Nordic-Baltic cooperation. The group, headed by former Latvian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mr. Valdis Birkavs and former Danish Minister of Defense Mr. Søren Gade, was to provide a comprehensive analysis and recommendations on the future of Nordic-Baltic cooperation. The Birkavs - Gade report with the initial recommendations was approved at the NB8 Ministerial meeting on August 26-27, 2011. The report provided practical guidelines for further regional development. The practical suggestions related to the following fields:

- Foreign policy dialogue
- Cooperation of diplomatic representations
- Civil security, including cyber security
- Defense cooperation
- Energy
- The NB8 brand

A number of other Birkavs - Gade report recommendations have been or are being consecutively implemented in practice. The text of the report can be found [here](#).

During the recent years the Baltic and Nordic countries have developed a cohesive network of cooperation in political, military, economic, educational, environmental, cultural, banking and other areas. Regular meetings at a high political level, as well as expert consultations, are held, where regional issues and current international topics are reviewed. Meetings are not formalized, and their frequency as well as agenda are agreed upon demand. Several dozens of meetings per year usually take place.

Third countries also take interest in the format. Regular NB8+US meetings (so-called e-PINE format) at political directors' level take place since 2003. In 2011, it was agreed to hold meetings of NB8 and UK prime ministers, the idea developed into what today is known as the Northern Future Forum. Besides, annual meetings of the ministers of foreign affairs of NB8 and Visegrad Four (V4) have been taking place since 2013.

Each year, one of the NB8 countries assumes the coordinator's role. The coordinating country manages meeting schedules and hosts many meetings of different parties and levels in the NB8 format.

**Lithuania assumed the coordination of NB8 cooperation for 2022. The focus during Lithuanian coordination period will be on the following priorities:**

- 1) a more secure, safe, and resilient Baltic and Nordic region,
- 2) a sustainable, green, and interconnected region,

3) a hub of socially cohesive societies, champions of democracy and human rights.  
Topical issues of the international foreign policy will also be on the agendas of the meetings.

