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NORTHERN DIMENSION AS A FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION IN THE REGION OF NORTHERN EUROPE³

ABSTRACT

The Northern Dimension Policy was launched by the European Union in 1999. In order to contribute to stability and prosperity of Northern Europe this policy has encouraged comprehensive regional and cross border cooperation in the region. Since the end of 2006, the Northern Dimension Policy has not just been an EU policy, but rather a framework that implies the cooperation of equal partners – the European Union, Russia, Iceland and Norway. Because of the rich natural resources and numerous economic, social, military, environmental and other problems, Russia is of crucial importance for the implementation of the Northern Dimension Policy.

Key words: Northern Europe, European Union, Russian Federation, Iceland, Norway, cross-border cooperation

Launching and development of the Northern Dimension Policy

Significant changes have happened in the Northern Europe during the 1990ies. Soviet Union collapsed; three Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) regained the independence, while the EU spread its borders in 1995 to the north with accessions of

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Finland and Sweden.⁴ New strategic and security environment created new conditions for economic and other types of cooperation between Union and its neighbors from the north. Border of 1300 km was established between the EU and Russia and, inevitable, the north of Russia became particularly significant for the EU.⁵

At the summit of the European Council held by the end of the 1997 in Luxembourg, in order to focus the attention of the EU to its own geostrategic environment, Finland suggested launching of new policy as a framework for cooperation between the Northern European countries.⁶ As a part of new foreign and cross border policy of the EU, the Northern Dimension Policy should contribute to the economic growth and social security in the border areas of the Northern Europe. The endeavor to strengthen cooperation between the EU and Russia and to stop creation of new separation lines also was important for this initiative.⁷

At the summit held in December 1997 in Luxembourg, European Council sought from the European Commission to prepare report on the Finnish proposition. The year after, at the Vienna meeting, the European Council adopted the report issued by the European Commission. Since that moment the Northern Dimension Policy became part of the common foreign policy of the Union. In the Commission's report was emphasized that, for the European Union, the Northern region is important as a region with great natural resources and significant human and economic potential. It is also alleged that current situation in which some aspects of the regional environment causing great concern represents big challenge for future generations, too. Further, it is concluded that European Community has set network of close relations with countries in the region: Sweden and Finland are the EU member countries, Norway and Iceland are members of the European Economic Area while Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland are involved in the enlargement process. Relations between the European Community, its member states and Russian Federation are regulated by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.⁸ Also, it was pointed out that Northern region of the Union is the only direct geographic connection with the Russia and, as such, is extremely important for cooperation between the EU and Russia. It is interesting to mention that with this policy Union for the first time confirmed growing independence with Russia as well the need

⁴ Clive Archer & Tobias Etzold, "The EU's Northern Dimension: Blurring Frontiers between Russia and the EU North?", *Nordeuropaforum*, No. 1, Berlin, 2008, p. 11.

⁵ Alexander Sergounin, "Russia and the European Union: The Northern Dimension", *PONARS Policy Memo*, No. 138, Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, Washington, 2000, pp. 1-8.

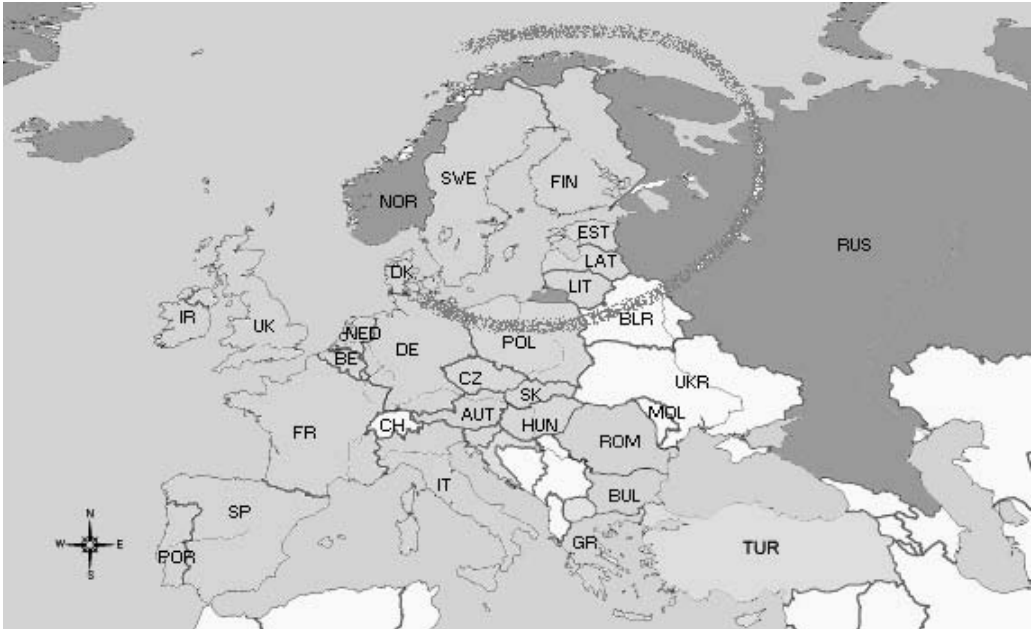
⁶ Pami Aalto, "The European Union's "Wider Northern Europe" and Estonia", *The Estonian Foreign Policy Yearbook*, Estonian Foreign Policy Institute, Tallinn, 2004, p. 32.

⁷ *Northern Dimension*, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Unit for Regional Cooperation, Helsinki, 2012, p. 3.

⁸ "A Northern Dimension for the policies of the Union", Communication from the Commission. COM (98) 589 final, 25.11.1998, Brussels, Internet, <http://aei.pitt.edu/3360/1/3360.pdf>.

to develop special cooperation with that country at regional level, especially in the northwest areas which neighbor the EU.⁹

Northern Dimension



Source: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/russia/eu_russia/fields_cooperation/regional_issues/northern_dimension/index_en.htm.

European Council, at the summit held in Cologne in June 1999, adopted guidelines for the implementation of the Northern Dimension policy. This document highlighted that the Northern Dimension Policy will strengthen positive interdependence between the European Union, Russia and other countries in the Baltic Sea region, especially regarding the EU enlargement process as well the need to provide security, stability and sustainable development in the Northern Europe.¹⁰

At the European Council Helsinki summit 1999, the European Commission was invited to prepare Action plan for the Northern Dimension, which lately the European Council adopted in Feira in June 2000. In the first part of the Action plan for the period

⁹ Alexander Sergounin, “Russia and the European Union: The Northern Dimension”, *PONARS Policy Memo*, No. 138, Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, Washington, 2000, pp. 1–8.

¹⁰ “A Northern Dimension for the Policies of the Union: An Inventory of Current Activities”, Working Document, European Commission, Brussels, 7 Sept. 1999.

2000-2003 is given an analyses of the situation in the region as well the problems with which it confronts, while in the second the overview of the goals and perspective for cooperation is contained. The starting point is the fact that Northern Europe is important for the EU, but that region is facing with great challenges which demands coordinated action and close cooperation of all partners. In that context is stated that special attention should be paid to prevailing of great distances, governing the rural areas with severe climate, over bridging huge social economic disparities and preserving cultural identities (especially minority languages). Also, it is concluded that the EU and its partners believe that the Northern Dimension will create conditions for close cooperation and thus contribute to greater security, stability, democratic reform and sustainable development in the region.¹¹ Transport, telecommunication, environment and natural resources, nuclear security, public health, commerce, business cooperation and promotion of the investments, development of human resources and research, justice and internal affairs, regional and cross border cooperation are listed as priority areas of regional cooperation, which should be improved by the Northern Dimension.¹²

After the expiring of the first action plan, second one is adopted for the period 2004-2006 and its aim was to provide clearer operational framework for all partners involved in the Northern Dimension, to set achievable goals and strategic priorities as well the concrete activities in priority areas of the regional cooperation which remained the same. There were five areas: economy, business and infrastructure; human resources, education, scientific research and health; the environment, nuclear security and nuclear resources; cross border cooperation and regional development; justice and internal affairs. Additionally, second action plan represent the Russian region Kaliningrad and Arctic region as two regions with special developmental needs in all priority areas of cooperation.¹³

Although at that time the Northern Dimension still was under EU leadership, in the second action plan was clearly stated that its success depends on active involvement of all actors at each level – national, regional and local.¹⁴

Action plans by their nature represent sort of political recommendation for the implementation of the Northern Dimension policy, which was the starting point for relevant actors whenever they prepared strategy or project that was funded under this

¹¹ “Northern Dimension - Action Plan for the Northern Dimension with external and cross-border policies of the European Union 2000-2003”, Council of the European Union, Brussels, 14 June 2000, Internet, http://www.ndphs.org/internalfiles/File/Strategic%20political%20docs/1st_ND_Action_Plan.pdf.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ “The second Northern Dimension Action Plan 2004-2006, Commission of the European Communities”, Commission Working Document, Brussels, 10 June 2003, Internet, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2003:0343:FIN:EN:PDF>.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

policy.¹⁵ But, no matter to the ambitious plans and numerous projects which have been planned, the more obvious was skepticism towards results achieved through the realization of the action plans.¹⁶

Since the introduction of the Northern Dimension, its major part was focused to cooperation with Russia, but in spite of that for very long period Russia did not show much interest for this initiative considering itself more like an object than an equal partner and thus behaved as an observer.¹⁷

Having on mind that relations with Russia were and still are of the key relevance for the implementation of this policy, it became obvious that certain reforms were necessary in order to preserve policy. Agreement on new guidelines for development of the Northern Dimension Policy was reached at the meeting of the ministries of foreign policies of the EU, Iceland, Norway and Russian Federation in November 2005 in Brussels. One of the basic results of this meeting was the arrangement along with Russia, Iceland and Norway will become equal partners of the Union in future designing and realization of the Northern Dimension policy. At the same time, in the aim to contribute to better realization of this policy, cooperation in the framework of the Northern Dimension was connected with general guidelines for cooperation in the framework of the strategic partnership between European Union and Russia.¹⁸

Regarding the fact that the second action plan would expire by the end of the 2006, at the time of the Finish chair the Union, Finland got additional chance to direct further development of the Northern dimension policy. Finish attitude was to develop this policy further in the mutual interest of the all member states but also with stronger participation of the main partners outside the EU borders. At Helsinki summit in November 2006, officials of the Union, Russia, Iceland and Norway adopted new package of a long term documents which replaced former three years long action plans. This package consists of Joint Political Declaration on the Northern Dimension Policy and Framework document. Policy goals and priority areas of cooperation are listed in the Framework document, but also are identified measures necessary for their realization.

In the joint Political Declaration of the Union, Iceland, Norway and Russia is emphasized the significance of the geographic nearness, economic interdependence and common cultural heritage for this region. Beside that, also is confirmed the mutual responsibility of all partners for the welfare of the inhabitants, prosperity and sustainable development of the Northern Europe. Also, it is stated commitment of all partners to actively cooperate in order to create conditions for development of this region and to improve mutual useful cooperation. By the end of Declaration is highlighted firmly

¹⁵ Urpo Kivikari, "The Northern Dimension—one pillar of the bridge between Russia and the EU", *Russian Economic Trends*, Vol. 11, Issue 3, 2002, pp. 26–30.

¹⁶ Pami Aalto, Helge Blakkisrud & Hanna Smith (eds.), *The New Northern Dimension of the European Neighbourhood*, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, 2009, p. 8.

commitment of the EU, Iceland, Norway and Russia to respect principles of good neighborly relations, equal partnership, mutual responsibility and transparency within the Northern Dimension Policy.¹⁹

For the first time, adopted documents were not terminated and that was a sign of determination to give a long term character to this policy.²⁰ Adoption of new documents transformed the Northern Dimension Policy into common policy of four equal partners (EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland) that are actively involved in its creation and implementation.²¹ Canada and the United States participate in this policy as observers because of their strong interests in the North. Four northern regional councils also are involved in the Northern Dimension Policy: Arctic Council, Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Council of the Baltic Sea States and Nordic Council of Ministers. Basic idea is that through various membership and adequate areas of cooperation these regional councils in different ways give their support to the realization of the Northern Dimension Policy projects.²²

Taking into account that EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland now has the same rights within the Northern Dimension Policy, for possible amending of the basic agreements consensus of all partners is required. To summarize: with adoption of the new package of documents in 2006, the Northern Dimension Policy became mutual project and responsibility of all partners., Preconditions for developing cooperation in the spirit of true partnership are set in that way.²³

Strategic goals and priority areas of cooperation within the Northern Dimension Policy

Framework document of the Northern Dimension Policy set the goals, priority areas of cooperation, monitoring mechanisms and funding of planned activities and projects.

One of the basic goals of the Northern Dimension Policy is to secure mutual framework for promoting of dialogue, cooperation, strengthening the stability, welfare,

¹⁷ Markku Heikkilä, *The Northern Dimension*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹⁸ Clive Archer & Tobias Etzold, "The EU's Northern Dimension: Blurring Frontiers between Russia and the EU North?", *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹⁹ "Political Declaration on the Northern Dimension Policy", Internet, http://eeas.europa.eu/north_dim/docs/pol_dec_1106_en.pdf.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 120.

²¹ Paavo Väyrynen, "The renewed Northern Dimension – Experiences and Expectations", Seminar on the Renewed Northern Dimension and the Next Steps in Lappeenranta on 31 May – 1 June 2007, Internet, <http://www.formin.finland.fi/public/download.aspx?ID=18156&GUIDD595>, p. 3.

²² "Northern Dimension Policy Framework Document", Internet, http://eeas.europa.eu/north_dim/docs/frame_pol_1106_en.pdf.

²³ *Ibidem*.

economic integration, competitiveness and sustainable development in the Northern Europe. Among the goals of this policy is promotion of the cross border cooperation and interhuman relations, having on mind long term perspective of introducing visa free regime between the Union and Russia. Also, this policy aims to foster municipal and regional authorities to involve in concrete projects of cooperation.²⁴

Framework document contains priority areas of cooperation within the Northern Dimension Policy. It is highlighted that they are expression of the joint efforts to conduct cooperation between the EU and Russia in four sectors (economic cooperation; freedom, security and justice, foreign security and research, education and culture). Thus, priority areas of the Northern Dimension Policy are: economic cooperation, cooperation in the area of freedom, security and justice, foreign security, research, education, culture, environment, nuclear safety, natural resources and health and social protection.²⁵

In the matter of the economic cooperation, main goal of the Northern Dimension Policy is to contribute to sustainable economic growth and economic stability in the northern part of Europe. In that context Framework document envisage removing trade and investment barriers at the national and local level, fostering health competition and providing help in developing transparent financial sector. Having on mind that economies of this region are more and more connected, special attention is dedicated to small and medium enterprises, innovations, functioning of the labor market and financial services. Apart from that, it is envisaged that economic cooperation should include cooperation in the areas of infrastructure, energetic sector, agriculture, forestry, transport as well the telecommunication and information technologies.²⁶

Matter of energetic is very important for the Union because it imports almost half of its total energy consumption. If this trend continues, the Unions' dependence on energy import will reach 70 percent.²⁷ Having on mind the fact that in the northwest Russia exist significant and inefficiently reserves of the natural gas, those reserves might have key role in the future Unions' supply with energy.

Although the long term potential for the exploitation of the natural resources in this region is tremendous, at the same time it demands constant improvement of energy and transport infrastructure. Energy infrastructure should be developed in a manner that will secure supply in an ecological acceptable and also more energy efficient and saving way. Because of that the EU is interesting in constructing new pipelines for gas transport from the northwest Russia to the Union and also in connecting energy networks that will provide optimal using of different sources of

²⁴ *Ibidem.*

²⁵ *Ibidem.*

²⁶ *Ibidem.*

²⁷ "Toward a European Strategy for Security of Energy Supply", *Green Paper*, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, 2000, p. 21.

energy in the region.²⁸ Developing of the transport infrastructure has great significance for economic development and promotion of the competitiveness of the region. In the first line, that means efficient using of the existing infrastructure and further construction of the pan European transport network in the region. Developing of transport infrastructure is necessary to secure access to all areas of the northern Europe and in that way boost new investments. Also, because of the severe climate conditions that rein the region during the most of the year, telecommunication sector and sector of the information technologies are of the special importance for the realization of the Northern Dimension Policy. Attracting the investments for growing and promoting of regional telecommunication infrastructure and setting up common law regulations are priorities in this area.

Speaking of cooperation in the area of freedom, security and justice, it is foreseen that it should include question of border management, respectively border security among partners, and to make easier contacts among people from the Northern Europe. Priorities in this area also are the reconstruction of the border facilities at the border passages, promoting of the judicial cooperation in criminal and civil matters and the struggle against all forms of organize and cross border crime.²⁹ Criminal is big problem in the region and thus demands joint efforts of all involved in the Northern Dimension Policy. Strengthening of the border control and more efficient and closer cooperation of the national and local authorities should secure more efficient response to new security challenges such as drug trafficking and nuclear materials trafficking, illegal migrations, cross border criminal activities and money laundry.

Cooperation in research, education and culture is also foreseen by Framework document. Cooperation in the scientific research should enable to identify the influence of the current economic, political, social and ecological changes to the region. Apart from that, it is necessary to establish close cooperation between enterprises, university and scientific community in order to improve economy and create new workplaces. Student exchange programs and youth policy are of vital importance for the region. Cooperation between national, regional and local authorities, nongovernmental organizations, private enterprises and civil society should contribute in preserving the cultural heritage, promoting of cultural variety and developing cultural tourism in the region.³⁰

One of the Northern Dimension Policy priorities is cooperation in the environmental protection area, nuclear safety and preserving of natural resources, including decreasing risk of the nuclear and other types of pollution. Attention is focused also to the marine security, environmental protection in the Barents and Baltic Sea, preserving of the

²⁸ Nicola Catellani, "Outlining the Northern Dimension: toward regional cooperation in Northern Europe", *The European Union's Northern Dimension*, Laboratorio CeSPI, Roma, 2000, p. 10.

²⁹ "Northern Dimension Policy Framework Document", *op. cit.*

³⁰ *Ibidem.*

biodiversity, negative consequences of marine pollution in the Arctic ecosystem and climate changes.³¹ The biggest challenges are all types of cross border ecological threats, persistent organic pollutants, climate changes, nuclear waste that more and more affects the health and vitality of people, flora and fauna in the Northern Europe.³²

During the cold war period in this region were stored numerous nuclear weapons, mainly in the nuclear submarines at the Russian Kola Peninsula. The great number of those submarines today is in very bad shape and threats to jeopardize the Arctic environment.³³ There are serious problems connected with dismantling of the nuclear reactors from the abandoned submarines, fuel disposal from the submarine reactors, processing and proper storage of the used fuel.³⁴ Those problems overcome capacities of any solely country or organization and thus their solving demands adjusted activities of all partners regarding reaching agreement about ecological standards and policies and financing joint activities.

Northern Europe region is rich in natural resources, especially oil, minerals and woods. The access to those resources gaining on the importance for developed world industries. At the same time, those resources are of vital importance for life and economic development of the local communities. In order to realize economic potential of the region without negative side effect of causing ecological misbalance of the area, it is necessary to provide self sustainable use of the natural resources. One should keep on mind that in this region Russia dispose of significant resources of oil, gas, minerals and woods.³⁵

Cooperation in the area of social and health insurance is also foreseen, including the contagious disease prevention (first of all tuberculosis and HIV), drug addiction, alcoholism and promoting of cooperation among medical and social services. Regional cooperation in combat against spread of contagious diseases is of crucial importance, as well the activities in promoting health and healthy life styles.³⁶ There are noticeable differences between health and social protection services in the EU, Nordic countries and Russia. Medical conditions and system of social protection are in far worse condition in Russia compared to systems in the EU, Norway and Iceland. Particular concerning are conditions in the Russian border areas.³⁷

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² *The Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy*, Communications Bureau Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada, Internet, <http://www.international.gc.ca/polar-polaire/ndfp-vnpe2.aspx?lang=en&view=d#11>.

³³ Nicola Catellani, "Outlining the Northern Dimension: toward regional cooperation in Northern Europe", *op. cit.*, p. 10.

³⁴ *Nuclear Wastes in the Arctic: An Analysis of Arctic and Other Regional Impacts from Soviet Nuclear Contamination*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995, p.115.

³⁵ Jovan Dinić, „Prirodni potencijal Ruske federacije”, *Globus*, Vol. 41, No. 35, 2010, pp. 185–200.

³⁶ "Northern Dimension Policy Framework Document", *op. cit.*, p. 5.

³⁷ Nicola Catellani, "Outlining the Northern Dimension: toward regional cooperation in Northern Europe", *op. cit.*, p. 10.

Project realization, funding and institutional arrangements of the Northern Dimension Policy

In the Framework document is stated “Northern Dimension Policy partners give advantage to model of partnership” (...) “as an efficient mode to organize practical realization of projects in agreed priority areas”.³⁸ There are four partnerships within the Northern Dimension Policy.

First partnership which in 2001 outcome from the Northern dimension Policy was the *environment protection partnership*. This partnership is an example of good cooperation between partners and international financial institutions that manage to provide optimal financing for realization of top priority projects.³⁹ Lots of projects in this area were implemented in order to promote energetic efficiency, treatment and management of waste water, communal and agricultural waste, nuclear safety and radioactive waste management. It is considered that this partnership in concrete mode contributes improving the environment in the Northern Dimension region.⁴⁰

Partnership in the public health area and social welfare is set in 2003.⁴¹ Priority areas of this partnership are prevention of the major health issues, including contagious diseases, drug abuse and usual chronically diseases. Priority of this partnership also is promotion of healthy and social utility life styles. Regarding financing of the activities and projects within this partnership, first intention was to give a support through joint financing of the international financial institutions and private and public sector of the partner countries. However, although numerous projects in the area of public health and social welfare has been realized within the partnership, this partnership still didn't reach full capacity because of the lack of finances.⁴²

Partnership for transport and logistic was established in 2009 with the aim to improve main transport connections between Northern Dimension partners. This partnership should give an impetus to realization of the suggested projects and measures and to help in removing of the so called bottlenecks that slows their conducting. Partnership for transport and logistic covers all types of transport including road, railway, and internal water traffic as well the aviation and sea traffic.

³⁸ “Northern Dimension Policy Framework Document”, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

³⁹ Paul Vandoren, “Regional cooperation that works – the EU’s Northern Dimension Policy”, *Bimonthly Review*, No. 1, Pan-European Institute, 2009, p. 13.

⁴⁰ “Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership”, *News*, January 2012, Issue 27, Internet, <http://www.ndep.org/files/uploaded/NDEP%20News%20issue%2027.pdf>.

⁴¹ “Declaration Concerning the Establishment of a Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing”, Adopted at the Ministerial Meeting in Oslo on 27 October 2003, Internet, <http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/HOD/Vedlegg/Final%20Declaration%20Oslo%202003.pdf>.

⁴² Markku Heikkilä, *The Northern Dimension*, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

Last partnership (for the time being) launched within Northern Dimension Policy is *partnership for culture*. This partnership is set in 2010 as an instrument for regional cooperation in the different sectors of arts and culture in the Northern Europe. This partnership is a kind of platform for exchange of information and best practice in the practical project implementation and realization of cultural activities in the Northern Europe.

In Framework document of the Northern Dimension Policy is given that each new partnership should enjoy support of all partners involved, that from the beginning finances should be secured and that regarding management it should be self sustainable and supportive towards efforts of national authorities.⁴³

Impartial of partnerships is envisaged that concrete projects in agreed priority areas can be approved at the meetings of the ministers of foreign affairs or high officials. Projects and activities within the Northern Dimension Policy is realized by different actors and financed from various sources based on co-financing in which participate the EU with own financial instruments and programs, international regional organizations, international financial institutions, national budgets as well the regional and local organizations.⁴⁴

Speaking of the institutional arrangements of the Northern Dimension Policy arrangements, it is envisaged that decisions should be taken at the ministerial meetings (level of the ministers of the foreign affairs or equivalent level of the European Union/Commission, Iceland, Norway and Russian Federation). At the ministerial meetings is monitored the conducting of the Northern Dimension Policy, but sometimes they have some particular topic to discuss. These meetings are held each second year in the place agreed by partners. At any time, partners may agree to convey a special ministerial meeting. Meetings of the high officials of the Northern Dimension Policy are also envisaged. Those meetings are held if necessary, at least each year in turn between the ministerial meetings. To provide sustained work, activities between meetings are coordinate by Board of directors on the expert level consisted of the representatives of the European Union, Iceland, Norway and Russian Federation. Among other things, the Board of directors is kept informed about realization of the projects agreed.⁴⁵

Final remarks

During the last years Northern Dimension Policy evaluated from the Union's policy to joint political framework for cooperation between the equal partners – the EU, Norway, Iceland and Russia.

Emphasizing specific needs and opportunities of the Northern Europe this policy could bring stability, security, prosperity and sustainable development to the region. Northern

⁴³ “Northern Dimension Policy Framework Document”, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ *Ibidem.*

⁴⁵ *Ibidem.*

Dimension Policy attempts to realize its goals by actuating closer regional and economic cooperation and more efficient struggle against mutual challenges. It is estimated that the significance of the Northern Europe will additionally grow in future because the universal economic interdependence but also because of the need for new resources which are, in significant amount, situated in this region.

In spite the ambitious goals, the Northern Dimension Policy does not envisage creation of new, own institutions. It functions relying on the existing institutions and instruments of cooperation between the EU and northern neighbors. Thus Northern Dimension Policy is realized within the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement with Russia and the Agreement on the European Economic Area with Norway and Iceland.

Additional particularity of this policy represents participation of the numerous actors of different political and economic significance at the various levels of cooperation. Apart from national governments and EU authorities, to the development and implementation of the Northern Dimension Policy regional councils also contribute: Arctic Council, Council of the Baltic Sea States, Barents Euro-Arctic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers. Representatives of the international financial institutions – the European Investment Bank, Nordic Investment Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development are present at ministerial or expert meetings. Involving different actors make this type of cooperation good for exchange information about activities of all participants in the Northern Dimension Policy.

As a kind of multilateral forum of countries already involved in treaty agreements in the Northern Europe region, the Northern Dimension Policy has much flexible framework and is not based on the conditionality principle which is typical for other EU neighboring policies. Content of new package of Northern Dimension Policy documents is laid down through negotiations of all partners that transformed this policy to common policy of the EU, Russia, Iceland and Norway. As such Northern Dimension Policy today has greater potential to realize proclaimed goals then it has before.

In any case, its future will depend on readiness of all partners to conduct in practice joint strategy and in that way contribute to sustainable development of the region. Overall success will be affected a lot by readiness of Russia to involve actively in this policy. In that light great significance has a fact that Russian officials expressed content that this policy changed and also expressed readiness of Russia to engage both economically and politically in its implementation and development.

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