

Final Statement

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) from Russia, The Nordic countries and the Baltic countries assembled in Denmark for a conference on Democracy, Freedom of speech and Freedom of Association November 13th 2015 hosted by The University of Copenhagen (KU) and the NORDEN Association, and held as part of the activities being carried out in connection with the Danish Government's Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers 2015 declares in a Final Statement:

We urge the politicians and governments in the Baltic Sea Countries to give a much higher priority to cooperation in the region at all levels, including people-to-people relations. The Baltic Sea Region should be a region of peaceful cooperation.

Democratic institutions of the Baltic Sea Countries and Russia need to be developing not only the democratic procedures but also the values of democracy.

Tolerance, freedom to share views and beliefs in society, respect for all Human Rights and freedom of speech, assembly and association are guaranteed by the international agreements of the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the OSCE. The NGOs underline that these agreements are binding for all the Baltic Sea States.

We call upon all Baltic Sea States to secure respect for democratic principles and a democratic development in all Baltic Sea countries and allow contributions from free, independent organizations and free cross-border cooperation between NGOs around the Baltic Sea. We want the Baltic Sea to be a region of sustainable environmental development, mutual trust and democracy.

In stating our demands to our societies, we also state a demand to ourselves and urge all NGOs to work against the destabilisation that has occurred between our countries during the current situation in the Ukraine and its side-effects. The relations between Russia and its Western neighbours should not hinder the relations between Civil Society Organizations in our region.

People-to-people relations could become means for finding democratic and legal solutions to many issues in the region, as they form an area for open debate to prevent conflicts. Despite any tensions at the political level, we are citizens of neighbouring countries and strive to maintain stability and development through dialogue and international cooperation.

We should strive to find new and effective solutions to make our region a safer and more pleasant place for all its citizens.