



27 September 2023

# Baltic Sea Region Task Force

WITH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF:

Baltic-American  
Freedom Foundation



■■■ HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG  
**WASHINGTON, DC**  
USA | Canada | Global Dialogue

# Baltic Sea Region Task Force Meeting

**Wednesday, September 27, 2023**

**Date:** Wednesday, September 27, 2023  
**Time:** 11:45 to 5:00 p.m. EDT  
**Location:** Carnegie Endowment for International Peace  
1779 Massachusetts Ave NW #810  
Washington, DC 20036  
**Contact:** [Angela Nguyen](#)

The Baltic Sea region is a distinctive hub of international trade, energy flows, industrial links, and cultural exchange. At a time when major war has returned to Europe, it is also a potential theatre of confrontation with Russia. The countries of the Baltic Sea Region – the Nordics, the Baltics, Poland, and Germany – have long been linked through a web of close political, security, and defense cooperation formats, but cooperation has often been uneven. Russia’s aggression against Ukraine has united them against the shared threat. Recent events, such as Finland and Sweden joining NATO, Denmark removing its opt-out from the European Union’s Common Security and Defense Policy, NATO and the EU ramping up cooperation, and countries of the region vowing to advance their energy security are paving the way to a more coherent and comprehensive approach to security and defense in the region.

As Europe grapples with the end of the post-Cold War order, transatlantic allies must think anew about what role Northeastern Europe and the Baltic Sea Region will play in Europe’s security and defense architecture. How can the practical substance of existing cooperation formats be leveraged to respond to new threats? What is the best way to work with private sector stakeholders on shared security challenges, conventional and new? What is the future role for the US in Northeastern Europe and how can transatlantic security cooperation be strengthened? European stability, peace, and prosperity are at stake in the Baltic Sea Region. The potential for innovation and cooperation is substantial.

Please note that the whole meeting will be conducted under Chatham House Rule.

**Task Force Meeting: 11:45 to 5:00 p.m. EDT**

## **Agenda**

### ***Participants Arrive***

September 27, 11:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. EDT

### ***Welcome Remarks***

September 27, 12:15 to 12:20 p.m. EDT

Speaker: [Sophia Besch, Fellow, Europe Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#)

### ***Keynote Lunch: U.S. foreign policy priorities for the Baltic Sea Region***

September 27, 12:20 to 1:35 p.m. EDT

To many, the war in Ukraine has prompted a “shift to the East” in the European balance of power. What are the implications of this shift for how Washington interacts with its European partners? What does the US expect from the Baltic Sea Region countries when it comes to securing their neighbourhood? Reversely, what can and what should European allies expect from Washington? Since the beginning of the war, the U.S. has stood firm on its commitment to European security and played a defining role in the transatlantic response to Russian aggression. At the same time, an upcoming election in the United States and an ongoing domestic conversation about strategic priorities raise the question under what constraints US foreign and security policy in Europe will have to operate in years to come?

Speaker: [Hannah Thoburn, Senior Professional Staff Member, Committee on Foreign Relations at the United States Senate](#)

Chair: [Daniel Baer, Senior Vice President for Policy Research, Director of the Europe Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#)

### ***Coffee Break***

September 27, 1:35 to 2:00 p.m. EDT



## ***Session 1: A NATO lake? Securing the Baltic Sea***

September 27, 2:00 to 3:15 p.m. EDT

Freedom of navigation, unhindered energy supply, and secure lines of communication in the Baltic Sea region are essential to NATO allies. The Baltic Sea hosts significant cross-border critical infrastructure links below surface and onshore, including underwater gas pipelines, LNG terminals, and fibreoptic cables. When the accession plans for Sweden and Finland were announced, some went as far as to declare the Baltic Sea a future “NATO lake.” Others have warned that Russia still maintains significant power projection capability. The bombings of the Nordstream pipelines in 2022 and ongoing Russian hybrid attacks and threats have forced European governments to pay more attention to the vulnerable infrastructure in their seas.

As Europe is re-engaging with maritime security, and interest and investment levels are rising, what investments are needed in capabilities, procurement, and strategy? How can countries better coordinate their maritime presences in the Baltic Sea region? What should be the role of NATO and EU? What is needed to coordinate the responses of private infrastructure owners and operators, policy makers, militaries, police and coast guards? And how can we apply lessons learnt in the Baltic Sea to other NATO operational theatres?

### **Speakers**

- [Liana Fix, Fellow for Europe at the Council on Foreign Relations \(CFR\)](#)
- [John Deni, Professor, U.S. Army War College](#)

Moderator: [Sophia Besch, Fellow, Europe Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#)

### ***Coffee Break***

September 27, 3:15 to 3:30 p.m. EDT

## ***Session 2: The Baltic Sea Region as a Frontline for European Energy Security***

September 27, 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. EDT

The Baltic Sea region is a focal point for Europe’s energy independence from Russia. Governments are diversifying their energy mix – by expanding their LNG import

infrastructure and by investing in renewable energy sources, focusing especially on wind and solar energy. The Baltic States also want to accelerate their departure from the Russian power grid and synchronize with the European grid instead. A faster energy transition is needed to help achieve climate goals, lower energy prices, and increase energy independence and security.

What does the region need to achieve its ambitious energy goals? What is the best strategy to advance both sustainable energy and energy security in the Baltic Sea Region? How can the region secure financing and constructive cooperation with the private sector and industrial developers? What needs to be done to protect and secure the additional energy infrastructure? And what can other countries learn from regional approaches to quitting Russian energy?

#### Speakers

- Claire Healy, Senior Associate, E3G Washington Office
- Sergey Vakulenko, Nonresident Scholar, Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center

Moderator: Noah Gordon, Acting Co-Director, Sustainability, Climate, and Geopolitics Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

#### ***Closing Remarks***

September 27, 4:45 to 5:00 p.m. EDT

Speaker: Daniel Baer, Senior Vice President for Policy Research and Director of the Europe Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

#### ***Participant Dinner- Ristorante i Ricchi***

**Date:** Wednesday, September 27, 2023

**Time:** 6:30 p.m. EDT

**Location:** Ristorante i Ricchi

1220 19<sup>th</sup> St NW

Washington, DC 20036

## List of Participants

**Marjut Akola**

Deputy Chief of Mission  
*Embassy of Finland*

**Dan Baer**

Senior Vice President of Policy  
Research, Director of Europe  
Program  
*Carnegie Endowment for  
International Peace*

**Darshana M. Baruah**

Fellow, South Asia Program  
*Carnegie Endowment for  
International Peace*

**Lee Beck**

Senior Director, Europe and Middle  
East  
*Clean Air Task Force*

**Jānis Bekeris**

Deputy Chief of Mission  
*Embassy of Latvia*

**Kristine Berzina**

Managing Director, GMF North  
*German Marshall Fund of the  
United States*

**Sophia Besch**

Fellow, Europe Program  
*Carnegie Endowment for  
International Peace*

**Sebastian Bruns**

Senior Researcher, Center for  
Maritime Strategy & Security  
*Institute for Security Policy Kiel  
University*

**Christian Bueger**

Professor of International Relations  
*University of Copenhagen*

**Mark Cancian**

Senior Advisor to the International  
Security Program  
*Center for Strategic and  
International Studies*

**Evita Čikute**

Congress Liaison  
*Embassy of Latvia*

**Madison Creery**

Senior Analyst  
*Center for Strategic and Budgetary  
Assessments*

**Ann-Sofie Dahl**

Nonresident Senior Fellow  
*Atlantic Council*

**John R. Deni**

Research Professor of Security  
Studies  
*U.S. Army War College's Strategic  
Studies Institute*

**Teresa Eder**

Director of Foreign Policy Program  
*Heinrich Böll Foundation*

**Mats Engström**

Senior Policy Fellow  
*European Council on Foreign  
Relations*

**Liana Fix**

Fellow, Europe  
*Council on Foreign Relations*

**Stephen Flanagan**

Adjunct Senior Fellow  
*RAND Corporation*

**Noah Gordon**

Acting Co-Director Sustainability,  
Climate, and Geopolitics Program  
*Carnegie Endowment for  
International Peace*

**Max Gruenig**

Senior Policy Advisor  
*E3G*

**Claire Healy**

Senior Associate  
*E3G*

**Helga Kalm**

Director of Lennart Meri Conference  
*International Centre for Defence  
and Security*

**Isaac Kardon**

Senior Fellow, Asia Program  
*Carnegie Endowment for  
International Peace*

**Jennifer Kavanagh**

Senior Fellow, American Statecraft  
Program  
*Carnegie Endowment for  
International Peace*

**Jamie Kern**

Policy Officer for Energy  
*Delegation of European Union to the  
United States*

**Marju Korts**

Economic Counsellor  
*Estonia Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

**Maria Markowska**

Head of Political Section  
*Embassy of Poland*

**Marek Menkiszak**

Head of Russian Department  
*Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)*

**Andrew Metrick**

Fellow, Defense Program  
*Center for New American Security*

**Carl-Magnus Nilsson**

Head of Political Section  
*Embassy of Sweden in Washington*

**Olevs Nikers**

President  
*Baltic Security Foundation*

**Samuel Peat**

Diplomat, Foreign, Security &  
Development  
*British Embassy*

**Rachel Rizzo**

Nonresident Senior Fellow, Europe  
Center  
*Atlantic Council*

**Margus Särglepp**

Deputy Chief of Mission  
*Embassy of Estonia*

**Jukka Savolainen**

Director Community of Interest  
“Vulnerabilities and Resilience”  
*Center of Excellence for Countering  
Hybrid Threats*

**Zelma Sergejeva**

Visiting Fellow, Transatlantic  
Security Initiative  
*Atlantic Council*

**Hannah Thoburn**

Senior Professional Staff Member,  
Europe and Eurasia  
*Senate Foreign Relations Committee*

**Sergey Vakulenko**

Nonresident Scholar  
*Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center*

**Artūras Vazbys**

Deputy Chief of Mission  
*Embassy of Lithuania*

**Henri Vanhanen**

Research Fellow  
*Finnish Institute of International  
Affairs*

**Morten Vestergaard Jacobsen**

First Secretary, Foreign & Security  
Policy  
*Ministry of Foreign Affairs of  
Denmark*

**Gavin Wilde**

Senior Fellow, Technology and  
International Affairs Program  
*Carnegie Endowment for  
International Peace*

**Christian Yarnell**

Deputy Director, Office of Policy and  
Regional Affairs, Bureau of European  
and Eurasian Affairs (EU/PRA)  
*Department of State*

**Viltaute Zarembaite**

Visiting Fellow, Transatlantic  
Security Initiative  
*Atlantic Council*