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THE SWEDISH INSTITUTE
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4-5 June 2024

Baltic Sea Region Security Task Force

Stockholm, Sweden

WITH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF:

Baltic-American
Freedom Foundation



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Sweden



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG

WASHINGTON, DC

USA | Canada | Global Dialogue

Baltic Sea Region Task Force Meeting

Tuesday, June 4 – Wednesday, June 5, 2024

Date: 4-5 June 2024
Location: The Swedish Institute for International Affairs
Drottning Kristinas väg 37
114 28 Stockholm, Sweden
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 Northeastern Europe and 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. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has united them against the shared threat. With Finland and Sweden joining NATO, Denmark removing its opt-out from the European Union's Common Security and Defense Policy, and NATO and the EU ramping up cooperation, now is the time to forge a truly joint approach to security and defense challenges 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 Task Force meeting will be conducted under Chatham House Rule.

Task Force Meeting: 9:30 to 17:30 CEST

Agenda

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

participants meet at hotel lobby at 17:30 to walk to the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Reception in the Blue Salon at the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Tuesday, June 4, 18:00 to 19:30 GMT+2

Participant Dinner – Restaurang Tradition

Date: Tuesday, June 4
Time: 19:30-21:00 GMT+2
Location: Österlånggatan 1
113 53 Stockholm
Sweden

Wednesday, June 5, 2024

*participants meet at hotel lobby at 8:45 to go to the Institute for International Affairs *

Location: The Swedish Institute for International Affairs
Drottning Kristinas väg 37
114 28 Stockholm, Sweden

Participant Registration

Wednesday, June 5, 9:30 to 10:00 GMT+2

Welcome Remarks

June 5, 10:00 to 10:05 GMT+2

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

Session 1: The state of Baltic Sea Region security cooperation

June 5, 10:05 to 11:30 GMT+2

The Baltic Sea region and countries in Northeastern Europe face serious security challenges. Russia continues to test and provoke NATO's resolve through near constant gray-zone operations, including border incidents and threats to critical infrastructure at sea and on the shore. In response, governments in the region are strengthening cooperation and coordination efforts. Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO is significant in broadening the scope of cooperation. Outside of NATO, several political, security and defense cooperation formats have existed for years. Russian aggression is now increasing the pressure for output.

What are the practical implications of Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO for cooperation in Northeastern Europe? What are the most important security challenges for countries in the region and how united are they in their assessment of appropriate responses? How do the countries in the region view the future of Ukraine in Europe? And how does Washington assess the role of the region in European security? Is there value in a united regional stance in Washington and Brussels, and what are the best formats for coordination? Looking ahead at the NATO Summit in Washington, DC, what can the region bring to the table?

Speakers

- Karsten Friis, Research Professor with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs' (NUPI) Research Group on Security and Defence
- Katherine Kjellstrom Elgin, Fellow, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

Moderator: [Sophia Besch](#)

Lunch

Wednesday, June 5, 12:00 to 12:45 GMT+2

Speech and fireside conversation with Tobias Billström, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden

Wednesday, June 5, 13:00 to 14:00 GMT+2

Opening Remarks: [Jakob Hallgren](#)

Speaker: [Tobias Billström](#)

Moderator: [Dan Baer](#)

Public Panel: 2024 elections and the future of transatlantic security

Wednesday, June 5, 14:00 to 15:15 GMT+2

The future of European security is on the ballot in 2024. Both in Europe and the U.S. the growing appeal of right-wing candidates and ideologies threaten democratic values and multilateral cooperation. In the United States, domestic politics have slowed down recent efforts to support Ukraine and voters could elect a President who might turn away from NATO and leave Europeans to support Ukraine and defend themselves. In Europe, the European Parliament may become more right-wing, which could stall EU policy-making, reroute financial resources and embolden national leaders to turn more isolationist.

In the face of right-wing surges in both Europe and the U.S., how can transatlanticists convey the importance of cooperation? What should European policymakers prioritize in the short term to ensure that the outcome of these elections do not undermine support to Ukraine? What can they do in the long term to adapt to structural trends in US politics and put European security and defense on a stable footing?

Speakers

- [Dan Baer](#), Senior Vice President for Policy Research and Director of the Europe Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- [Ian Bond](#), Deputy Director, Centre for European Reform
- [Anna Wieslander](#), Director for Northern Europe, Atlantic Council

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

Coffee Break

Wednesday, June 5, 15:15 to 16:00 GMT+2

Session 2: Mobilizing Societies for Total Defense

Wednesday, June 5, 16:00 to 17:30 GMT+2

The concept of “Total Defense” - a whole-of-society approach that combines military, civil, territorial, economic and psychological defense elements - has gained renewed attention in the face of Russian gray zone aggression. From resilience against disinformation and cyber threats, to securing companies and protecting transportation, electricity, water, and food supply, European governments must invest in securing their societies.

Several Nordic and Baltic states are leaders in the field of total defense - what lessons can we learn from the different national models about how to protect societies against old and new threats? How can governments best involve the private sector and the wider population in these efforts? How useful are mandatory military and civil service models? How are domestic politics likely to affect total defense efforts? And how can countries in the region better coordinate their efforts to ensure regional resilience?

Speakers

- [Minna Alander, Research Fellow, Finnish Institute of International Affairs](#)
- [Marta Kepe, Senior Defense Analyst, RAND](#)

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

Closing Remarks

June 5, 5:30 to 5:45 p.m. GMT+2

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

List of Participants

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