

Joint Statement on the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Denmark and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – a vision for the future cooperation

This year, we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Denmark and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, determined to further consolidate the strong relationship and close friendship that our countries have enjoyed to date. While we are connected by geography, we are also bound together by common values, mutual interests as well as extensive economic and cultural relations and people-to-people contacts.

The year 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of Denmark's recognition of the Baltic States after their independence in 1918. Additionally, 2021 is the 30th anniversary of the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Denmark and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania after the Baltic countries regained their independence. Denmark never recognised the annexation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union and was one of the first countries to support Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in their struggle for freedom and to restore diplomatic relations. On 26 August 1991, the four foreign ministers, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, Lennart Meri, Jānis Jurkāns, and Algirdas Saudargas, signed a joint communiqué in Copenhagen, which stated that *“a long dark chapter of the Baltic history has finally come to an end. We rejoice at this momentous event. The Baltic people are again masters in their own houses”*. Today, in Copenhagen, we highlight the special historical ties between our countries and reaffirm our strong bond of cooperation.

Our cooperation has developed significantly over the last 30 years. This is in part due to the Baltic nations' significant societal development as well as the impressive international integration, not least through membership of the EU and NATO. The double anniversary is an opportunity to look ahead and further develop our cooperation. By seeking new areas of cooperation to jointly meet the global challenges, we also contribute to the common objective of making the Nordic-Baltic region a more competitive, sustainable and innovative region.

Our security is indivisible. Therefore, we share the common goal of preserving the security and stability in the Baltic Sea Region and the entire Euro-Atlantic area together with Allies and partners. Our common efforts in NATO and through NATO's enhanced Forward Presence, the Baltic Air Policing mission, the Multinational Division North and NATO Force Integration Unit demonstrate our resolve and solidarity in support of each other as close Allies. We will develop and strengthen our cooperation on security, deterrence and defence, including on countering hybrid threats. We will continue to promote the security of our region through NATO and through stronger NATO-EU cooperation. We will also continue to contribute to international security through active participation in international operations and missions, in which we often work closely together, such as our shared efforts in NATO Mission Iraq, currently led by Denmark, where Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania contribute to the Danish force protection unit.

We are strongly committed to the common European values. 30 years ago, Denmark supported the Baltic States in their fight for democracy and freedom. Today, our four nations are strong democracies, and we are jointly committed to defending and promoting the EU's founding values, not least democracy and the rule of law. Building on our own strong democratic foundation, we will also work together to support the countries in our Eastern neighbourhood in their struggle for freedom, democracy and human rights. Our recent cooperation and common efforts regarding the situation in Belarus and Ukraine are important examples. Europe as a whole will not be free and at peace as long as our Eastern partners' sovereignty and their fundamental rights and choices are being undermined and international law is violated. We will safeguard democratic principles and human rights globally and regionally, including through relevant multilateral fora such as the UN. As we honour the 100th anniversary of the birth of Andrei Sakharov and look forward to a restart of the Sakharov hearings on human rights, we maintain our strong political

support for freedom, and we will continue to work together to support civil society, the free and pluralistic media and human rights organisations in our neighbourhood.

We agree to take ambitious steps to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement. We will work closely together to promote a just green transition of our societies by sharing our experiences, solutions and know-how. In particular, our cooperation to advance onshore and offshore wind energy in the Baltic Sea is of key importance, also as a means of addressing energy security. Internationally, we will engage in strong climate and energy diplomacy to promote a just global green transition, phase out coal and to push the world's biggest economies to make sustainable changes and advocate for adherence to the highest international standards of nuclear safety and environmental protection in third countries. We will improve the sustainable development of farming, food and rural areas and bolster environmental care. At the same time, we will serve as an example, showing that an ambitious green transition is achievable, while simultaneously creating jobs and economic growth.

One of our biggest current challenges is to secure an economic recovery from COVID-19. We are committed to use the European Recovery and Resilience Facility to ensure a strong and socially balanced economic recovery, fostering job-creation and advancing the green and digital transition of our societies. This is also a unique opportunity for increased mutually beneficial commercial cooperation. In this regard, we also underline the need to ensure strict implementation, enforcement and strengthening of the Single Market rules as well as working expeditiously on removing existing barriers and addressing vulnerabilities shown by COVID-19. Strengthened cooperation within higher education and research should also act as a catalyst in reaching the twin ambitions of green and digital transition, with a focus on the European economic recovery, innovation, competitiveness and opening up of data. Building on the core principle of excellence, we are committed to enhance our collective efforts within higher education and research to reach our common goals.

We are committed to building a future with responsible, democratic and secure technology in Europe and globally. Through innovative and responsible technological solutions, we can improve the lives of our people and strengthen our societies and economies. Responsible technology will be crucial if we are to solve some of the greatest challenges of the 21st century such as climate change and fair terms for markets and employment. At the same time, we recognise that technology also entails risks that require our attention, including cyberattacks, disinformation and authoritarian surveillance.

We will continue to work together in the EU with all Member States to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, including through cooperation on accelerated production of vaccines as a means to overcome the health crisis and to ensure the return to normal life for our citizens.

We will continue to support the strong cultural ties between our countries and our people. The Danish Cultural Institute opened the first international cultural institute in the Baltic States in Riga in 1990. This happened already during the Baltic struggle to regain independence and before formal diplomatic ties could be reestablished. Still today, the Danish Cultural Institute promotes important cultural exchange and people-to-people contacts. We encourage our citizens to participate in the many cultural activities in Kaunas as the city becomes European Capital of Culture in 2022.

In achieving the goals outlined above, we will make use of our multifaceted cooperation – bilaterally, through regional cooperation formats, including Nordic-Baltic cooperation and the Council of the Baltic Sea States, and through relevant multilateral fora. As small states, we acknowledge that we can best promote our common values and safeguard our interests through strong cooperation in multilateral institutions. Therefore, our collaboration within the EU, NATO, UN and other organisations will continue to be the cornerstones of our cooperation.