

**Nordlicht in Europa – The Northern Lights shine over Europe a conference to
be held at the European Academy Berlin**

At the present time the world has other 'hot spots' in mind apart from the Baltic Sea region, and therefore it is understandable that this area is not receiving very much public attention. Nevertheless, politics moves along over the longer term, and thus violent political changes or coups in Northern Africa and even earthquakes and nuclear disasters in Asia, however important and terrible these may be, ought not to lead to forgetting or neglecting the region in which one lives.

With effect from 01 July 2011, Germany will assume the Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States for one year. The European Academy Berlin, the Academia Baltica, the Baltic Sea Forum as well as Euractiv, the EU media portal service, propose to take this as an opportunity to undertake a stock check on cooperation relations in the Baltic Sea region.

The conference will be held from 08 to 11 May 2011 at the European Academy Berlin which is located in the Grunewald district of Berlin.

To open the proceedings, the Swedish diplomat Mr. Jan Lundin, Director General of the Secretariat of the CBSS, will report on the work of the Council, as will Dr. Wolf-Ruthart Born, State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office, and the Norwegian diplomat Mr. Dag Briseid, Chair of the Committee of Senior Officials in the Council of the Baltic Sea States; this first session will be chaired by former Minister in the Federal Government Kurt Bodewig, Chairman of the Baltic Sea Forum. Some time ago now, the Finnish Foreign Minister gave voice to considerations as to whether the Council of the Baltic Sea States - founded in 1992 as a result of Danish and German initiatives - should be wound up or extensively altered in the way it operates. What has emerged from this critique, what stand did the CBSS take in reacting to it? What objectives did the Norwegian Presidency set for its term of office which continues until June 2011 – and which of them has it achieved? What will Germany be striving for in the period when they have the Presidency? This and further questions will be posed and answers sought in presentations and discussion sessions.

In this context, the intention is also to analyse what interests Russia is pursuing by means of Baltic Sea cooperation, and in what ways this major country bordering on the Baltic Sea may be integrated into joint activities in a binding fashion.

The conference may also be a vehicle enabling development in a number of Baltic Sea countries to be more closely examined. Ambassadors or representatives from Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Denmark

and Iceland, which is incorporated in Baltic Sea cooperation, will address current events and political structures in their own countries in the form of country reports.

On the concluding day of the conference attention will be given to two further topics, firstly to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, secondly to the Nord Stream gas pipeline, more generally known as the Baltic Sea Pipeline. The European Union adopted the Strategy for the Baltic Sea region in 2009, since that time it has been implemented. What has transpired, what successes have there been, in what fields is there no progress? Dr. Carsten Schymik, expert on Northern European affairs, will address these questions. It would be difficult to claim that the Baltic Sea pipeline has made a contribution towards harmony in the Baltic Sea region. Now this project is due for completion, and the whole field of conflicting interests will be explored in a discussion with the Communications Director of Nord Stream.

By means of this conference, the European Academy Berlin is continuing to focus its attention on the Baltic Sea region. In 2010, there was an intensive examination of the Baltic Sea Strategy, as a result of which the book entitled "Das europäische Meer: Die Ostsee als Handlungsraum" came into being and was published in 2011 by the Berlin Wissenschaftsverlag. In a total of eleven individual essays, light is thrown on cooperation structures around and about the Baltic Sea.

Registration for the conference can be completed by contacting the Academy in Berlin by phone +49/30/89 59 51 27 or by e-mail: ir@eab-berlin.eu (Ilona Rathert). The conference registration fee of 150 -- euros covers three nights bed and breakfast (single room) in the conference centre of which the Academy is part (three star hotel category) as well as meals etc. during the conference. For anyone not wishing to be accommodated in the Academy, a conference fee of 75 -- euros is required.