

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

The EU Presidency and the Northern Dimension Initiative:

Applying International Regime Theory

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by

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In loving memory of my Grandfather

To Simon, Noah and Ossian

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ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Arctic Council
ASEM	Asia Europe Meeting
BASREC	Baltic Sea Region Energy Co-operation
BEAC	Barents Euro-Arctic Council
BSRI	Baltic Sea Region Initiative
BP	Barcelona Process
CARDS	Financial instrument of the Stabilisation and Association process
CBC	Cross Border-Co-operation
CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
COREPER	Committee of Permanent Representatives
CSR	Committee of Senior Representatives
DG	Directorate-General
EA	Europe Agreement
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Community
ECOFIN	Economic and Financial Council
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Area
EIB	European Investment Bank
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union

ESC	Economic and Social Committee
EU	European Union
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IFI	International Financial Institution
INTERREG	Inter Regional
ISPA	Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession
IT	Information Technology
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
MAP	Multiannual Programme for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship
MEDA	Financial instrument of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
MEFTA	Mediterranean-European Free Trade Area
MLG	Multi-Level Governance
MNEPR	Multilateral Nuclear and Environment Programme in Russia
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCM	Nordic Council of Ministers
ND	Northern Dimension
NDEP	Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership
NDPPS	Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing
NeDAP	Northern eDimension Action Plan
NEI	Northern Europe Initiative
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIB	Nordic Investment Bank
NIS	Newly Independent States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PHARE	Poland and Hungary: Action for the Restructuring of the Economy
SAPARD	Special Accession Programme for Agriculture Rural Development
TACIS	Technical Assistance Commonwealth of Independent States
TEMPUS	Programme de mobilité transeuropéenne pour l'enseignement supérieur
USA	United States of America
WTO	World Trade Organisation

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION*

1. EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Based on a Finnish initiative from 1997, the 'Northern Dimension' (ND) was adopted in the European Union's (EU) external policies and cross-border relations through a Commission Communication a year later. The ND represents an EU regional approach towards the countries in the Baltic Sea region. It covers geographically the three Nordic EU members and the northern parts of Germany, as well as the non-EU partner countries of the three Baltic States, Iceland, Norway, Poland and Northwest Russia.

The ND has a particular focus on Northwest Russia and the soft security challenges that emanate from this part of the region. Whilst representing an initiative in the EU's external relations, it can also be seen as a case of the Union's so-called 'proximity approach' (or 'neighbourhood' policy), i.e., the EU's approach towards its nearest neighbouring states and regions. This is often shaped by political and economic security concerns, and on the belief that regional and cross-border co-operation and economic development stabilise the particular region. The aim is to extend common EU principles, values and standards to the neighbouring area. Both

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EU members, candidate countries and non-candidates can geographically be located in this field. To these areas belong besides Northern Europe including Russia through the ND, other regions such as the Western Newly Independent States (NIS), the Black Sea region, and the Mediterranean region including the Middle East and Western Balkans (see also Smith, 2002:107, 156; Christiansen *et al.*, 2000:391-401).

The ND constitutes an umbrella concept for a wide range of cross-border co-operation areas among the countries and international institutions involved in the region. It aims at complementing and co-ordinating the programmes and actions already begun in the region during the last decade, both by the EU and other regional bodies. It can be seen as a co-ordination instrument that intends to increase efficiency and through which a division of labour could be established among the regional organisations involved.

Through co-operation and joint projects in various fields such as environmental protection, facilitating trade co-operation, fight against organised crime, trafficking in drugs and human beings, and illegal immigration, it aims at strengthening the common values of security, stability and sustainable development as well as to avoiding the establishment of dividing-lines in the context of enlargement. The ND can further be understood as an arena where both the EU and its member-states are attempting to export specific policy objectives, principles, values and norms to neighbouring areas. It can therefore be seen as a framework concept for priority setting among the actors involved.

The ND entails a number of rather innovative elements with the implication that it does not represent traditional EU foreign policy-making. *First*, geographically, it includes also a number of member-states – the three Nordic EU members (and northern Germany) – which generally is not the case in the EU’s foreign policy approaches. *Second*, it entails an extended consultative approach towards the non-EU partner countries Estonia, Iceland, Norway, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. Non-members are traditionally not allowed to participate in the EU foreign policy-making process and to influence the policy formulation, which is the case in the partner-oriented framework of the ND. In addition, only a part of the most important partner country, Russia, is addressed, namely its north-western regions including Kaliningrad. *Third*, it envisages a high level of cooperation with other regional bodies for its implementation, such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), the Arctic Council (AC) and the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM). *Fourth and finally*, it emphasises a horizontal coordination of EU policies and instruments across pillars and Directorate-Generals (DG).

The geographical scope of the ND and its main objective makes it pertinent to initially give a brief definition of this specific European sub-region and the particular challenges the ND aims at addressing. The Baltic Sea region is a geographical region covering nine littoral states of the Baltic Sea, which together face similar challenges (cf. Nikolayev, 1999). In explicit terms, this means Denmark, Estonia, Finland, the northern parts of Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Northwest Russia and Sweden. Iceland and Norway are also involved in many instances of Baltic Sea co-operation

although not bordering the Baltic Sea because of the long-standing and well-developed Nordic co-operation (see also Bengtsson, 2000:371).

Since the end of the Cold War there has been a far-reaching change of the northern European geopolitical map. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Baltic States regained independence in 1991; a unification of the two separate Germanys has taken place; Finland and Sweden joined the EU in 1995; and the Baltic States together with Poland will become members in 2004. Consequently, the EU has literally gained a 'northern dimension', and the question of security and stability in Northern Europe – which constitutes the crossroad of EU-Russia relations – has become important on the Union's foreign policy agenda.

The challenges in the region have profoundly changed compared to the Cold War era. There is now a 1,300 kilometre long common EU/Finland-Russia border, which is growing with the new enlargement. This constitutes the world's sharpest border in living standard between two countries. The continuation of such a gap could challenge Northern European stability and security in various ways (Prantl, 2000:20-21).

The security concept has become broadened, emphasising 'soft' rather than 'hard', military security issues. Although Russia still possesses a quite substantial military potential, it does currently not pose a serious hard security threat in the region. However, there remains a security challenge coupled to Russia's future political development, which has a potential of destabilising the overall security situation.

Consequently, today's challenges in Northern Europe are more of a non-military nature, resulting, on the one hand, from the yet unfinished economic and societal transformations in various Baltic Sea states, and on the other, from problems inherited from the Soviet Union and its dissolution. To these belong issues such as environmental problems including nuclear safety, minority rights, health problems, cross-border organised crime, corruption and fraud within state administrations, trafficking in drugs and human beings, illegal immigration, and disparities of living standards (Kiljunen, 2000; Lassinantti, 2000:1, 6-7; Jukarainen, 1999:366; Knudsen, 1999; Jopp & Warjovaara *eds.*, 1998:7-11; Vaahtoranta & Forsberg, 1998:191; Ivanov, 1999; Ahunov, 1999).

Besides these new challenges, Northern Europe is characterised by its complex network of regional organisations, associations, conferences and joint ventures that represent important opportunities for the region and reinforce regional interdependence. Important regional organisations are involved alongside the EU, addressing the region's potentials and challenges, such as the CBSS, the BEAC, the NCM, the AC as well as the Baltic Council. Much co-operation takes place at the border between the public and the private. There are established projects and co-operation between universities, chambers of commerce, firms, cities, parliaments, local and regional authorities, and the countries in the region have established co-operation schemes outside the regional bodies, such as the rigorous Nordic-Baltic (5+3) cooperation. However, this broad spectrum of organisations and multi-level co-operation that embraces the entire region, also contributes to some difficulties as regards the overlap of and co-ordination between the activities of different regional actors involved.

In this context, it has become increasingly important for the EU to find more effective responses in order to address the whole spectrum of the multi-faceted, cross-border soft security risks, to take advantage of the opportunities the region can provide and to enhance co-operation with its post-enlargement new neighbours. Promoting regional co-operation across its external borders has become a priority for the EU. The development of common projects is one of the main elements of this co-operation, helping to create new opportunities for the areas concerned and to overcome some of the economic, social and political obstacles arising because of the existence of an international border.

1.1 Chronological Development of the Northern Dimension

The European Commission's Communication named 'A Northern Dimension for the policies of the Union' that followed the initial Finnish initiative in 1997, was adopted at the Vienna European Council in 1998. The ND was thereby agreed as an official Union initiative. Through several meetings, conferences and documents, and various bilateral and multilateral projects, the ND has been further shaped and developed.

Six months after its adoption, the Cologne European Council agreed on the document 'Guidelines for the implementation of the Northern Dimension'. In November 1999, the Finnish Presidency held a first Foreign Ministers' Conference on the Northern Dimension, which adopted a first 'Inventory of current activities under the Northern Dimension'. The Helsinki European Council in December 1999 invited the

Commission to prepare an Action Plan, and consequently, the Feira European Council in June 2000 adopted the 'Action Plan for the Northern Dimension in the external and cross-border policies of the European Union' for the period 2000-2003; a key guide to the ND.

During the Swedish Presidency, the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference on the Northern Dimension held in April 2001, adopted the 'Full Report on Northern Dimension Policies'. The Danish Presidency in 2002 organised two conferences in relation to the ND. First, a conference in Greenland with a special focus on the 'Arctic Window' of the ND. Second, a Third Foreign Ministers' Conference in October, which prepared the 'Guidelines for the new Action Plan', adopted by the Copenhagen European Council in December 2002.

The Danish Presidency also had an ambition to integrate the ND within the developing EU 'proximity policy'. In the Commission Communication on 'Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours', presented in March 2003, the ND is indeed mentioned both as being an appropriate model for cooperation also in other regional contexts, and as constituting a part of the new 'proximity policy' through its partner country Russia. Finally, in June 2003, a new Action Plan for the years 2004-2006 was presented by the Commission. It was endorsed by the Brussels European Council in October 2003.

2. RESEARCH AREA AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The research topic deals with the EU's policy approach in its external relations towards a neighbouring region, which includes members, future members and other non-EU members. In this context, the focus lays on the Union's Northern Dimension initiative and on one of the important EU foreign policy actors, namely the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

The main theme is to apply an adapted version of international regime theory to an initiative in the Union's external relations – the Northern Dimension – and to treat the EU Presidency as an actor in regime analysis. Regime theory offers a comprehensive approach, both as regards the ways in which to depict the ND, as well as for assessing the role of the Presidency as an important actor for the development of an initiative on the Union's foreign policy agenda. The role of the Presidency in the framing of an international regime in the EU's external relations is assessed.

Regime analysis has proven valuable for the explanation of variations of approaches and activities during three selected Presidency periods. This leads to the main *purpose of the study, which is to assess the role of the Presidency in the development of an initiative on the Union's foreign policy agenda.* The chosen foreign policy approach is the Northern Dimension, and three Presidency periods have been selected, namely those held by Finland in the second half of 1999, Sweden in the first half of 2001 and Denmark in the second part of 2002.

Hence, the role of the ‘actor/agency’ in focus of this study, the EU Presidency, is here assessed for the development of a ‘structure’, the Northern Dimension, which shares many characteristics with the traditional description of an international regime, whilst simultaneously constituting an EU external relations’ initiative. EU foreign policy approaches are not in general seen as ‘structures’ in the terminology of International Relations. However, as the ND in this work is labelled an EU ‘composite policy regime’ based on its particular characteristics, this seems feasible (see further Chapter III).

The main argument in this study is that the Presidency has a particular role to play in the various regime phases that have been identified in the development of an international regime.

- *First*, the Presidency as an important EU foreign policy actor has a specific opportunity to influence the orientation of the regime development process through its Presidency approach, its undertaken activities and launched initiatives during its six months in office.
- *Second*, the phase of the regime development process in which the actual regime is located at the time for a specific Presidency influences the room of manoeuvre and the activities of the member-state in office.

Hence, the study aims at analysing and comparing the performance of an actor – the Presidency – in the formulation, implementation and general development of an initiative on the EU’s external relations’ agenda. The main interests, priorities and

focus as regards the ND during the three Nordic presidencies are assessed and compared.

2.1 Limitations

I have chosen to assess the role of the EU Presidency in the development of the ND. However, it is important to be aware that there are other actors involved in the development of the ND; both EU and non-EU actors. The European Commission has been singled out as an important actor as regards the implementation of the Action Plan, and it has a particular role when it comes to the day-to-day policy-making. Also regional organisations in the area have been given a certain role in this field. Both member-states and non-members contribute to the general development of the ND, and there are important international financial institutions (IFIs) involved as well as other non-state actors.

The actor in focus of this study is particularly interesting for the development of an initiative on the Union's foreign policy agenda, as it represents, promotes and possesses both supranational and national priorities, motivations, interests and values. The 'dual hats' of the Presidency strongly influence its launched initiatives and performed activities during the six months in office. As the study analyses the framing of various interests, values, principles and norms involved, the Presidency with its particular position as representing the EU at the same time as it possesses a special opportunity to bring up more national concerns, is a pertinent focus. Its

leadership role for the development of a regional initiative and a regime in the Union's external relations is here seen as fundamental.

The Presidency is seen as one actor, represented by three individual member-states. The presidencies of three states located within the geographical scope of the ND have been selected. These have been held within the same time interval, which facilitates an analysis of the development of the ND over time. These countries are further possible to compare as all belong to the group of smaller EU member-states, they are Nordic, located at the periphery of the EU, and all of them have a rather developed Baltic Sea region policy and give high priority to enhanced relations to the non-EU countries of the region. The public support for the integration process in these countries is further rather low.

However, it is important to illuminate important distinctions between the countries, which might affect their chosen Presidency priorities and concrete performance. Denmark has previous experience of chairing the Union as it has been a member since 1973, whilst Finland and Sweden chaired the Union for the first time in 1999 and 2001. The former is also a NATO member, whilst the latter two are restricted to join because of their security policies of military non-alignment. Whilst Denmark and Sweden are seen as rather 'federo-sceptic' EU-members (see Miles, 2003a:320) – Denmark possessing a few formal 'opt outs' from the integration process and Sweden remaining an 'Euro-outsider' – the Finnish political elite participates without any reservation in the integration process, although not explicitly embracing the concept of a federal Europe (cf. Raunio, 2003). The countries have important

distinctions in their historical development and geopolitical situation, and had in time for their Presidency terms different governmental compositions.

The timeframe of the thesis is the period from the very launch of the ND in 1997, and its development up until the presentation of the second Action Plan in 2003. However, the main focal point is the development of the ND during the time period of the three Nordic presidencies in 1999, 2001 and 2002. In the conclusion of this work, some potential future developments are further addressed.

3. NATURE OF THE STUDY – METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This section presents a brief outline of my course of action in conducting this study with the purpose to presenting the scientific approach and measurable base of the work, and further to increase its ‘validity’ and ‘reliability’ (cf. Ritchie and Lewis eds., 2003:270 ff.). Relevant and convenient data and material for the aim of the study have been gathered, at the same time as I have endeavoured to attain concordance between the theoretical and empirical parts of the study. By applying a variety of methods and techniques, I have tried to reach as precise and reliable end results as possible.

3.1 Qualitative Study with an Empirical Analytical Approach and a Comparative Perspective

The study is concentrated to the examination of the characteristics of the EU's Northern Dimension initiative and how this was developed during three Nordic Presidency periods. It aims at analysing the nature and attributes of the ND and the ambitions and concrete performance of each Presidency in relation to this. Since depth and qualities are more momentous here than statistics and numbers, and as the objective is to analyse the nature of and increasing the understanding for the development of the ND through a regime theoretical lens, qualitative methods seem to be more pertinent than the quantitative option (cf. Lundquist, 1993; Holme & Solvang, 1991; Repstad, 1993:8-13; Ritchie & Lewis *eds.*, 2003:2-5). The application of international regime theory in this study assists both in the selection of adequate material and influences the relevant aspects to draw attention to.

This study is characterised by an *empirical analytical approach* and a *comparative perspective*. The former approach is employed in large parts of the study in order to shed light on the characteristics and attributes of the ND and on how it has developed through the presidential ambitions, proposed initiatives and launched activities of three Nordic member-states. The interests, motivations and preferred activities of the respective Presidency for the ND, its issue-areas and regime components in focus are analysed.

After an empirical analysis, the three presidencies are compared with the main aim to assess existing variations and similarities between the countries regarding their

approach in the ND field. Regime analysis has proven useful for the comparison of the three presidencies as regards their general strategy for the term in office in relation to the ND, their definition of the ND, their presidential priorities and focus on various issue-areas, regime components and actors involved, their planned and undertaken activities, as well as presented proposals concerning the further development of the ND.

The comparison has been facilitated by the application of the same structure in the empirical analysis of each Presidency. *First*, there is an assessment of the Presidency performance in general terms, which might have an impact on its operation also in the field of the ND. The general Presidency themes are put in relation to its weight given to the ND. *Second*, the Presidency priorities and ambitions regarding the ND are looked at. *Third*, the achievements and concrete activities of the Presidency in the area of the ND, as well as issue-areas in focus during the six months in office are addressed and put in relation to its initial ambitions. *Fourth and finally*, there is an analysis of each Presidency, which focuses on three areas: (1) The room of manoeuvre and the leadership potential of the Presidency is looked at as regards its influence on the Union's foreign policy agenda in the field of the ND. (2) The Presidency's specific view of issue-areas involved and its definition of and focus on various regime components is addressed; topics that assist in the assessment of the Presidency's perception of the ND and its development. (3) The actual phase of the regime development process at the time for the Presidency is looked at. It is assessed to what extent this phase might affect and determine the activities and performance of the Presidency, and to what point the Presidency itself might influence the very orientation of the regime-building process.

3.2 Applied Techniques and Selection of Sources

Within this study's qualitative background, the techniques of *content analysis*¹ and *informative interviews* have been applied (cf. Repstad, 1993:13 ff.; Svenning, 2000:143-148; Berg, 2004:267 ff.; Ritchie and Lewis eds., 2003:200). A combination of analysis tools has been used in order to secure a wide and inclusive basis for the illumination of the research topic (cf. Berg, 2004:4-6).

In accordance with the addressed topic, namely to illuminate the views, priorities and perspective of three member-states *vis-à-vis* their Presidency activities and priorities in the field of the ND, the chapters on the three Nordic presidencies are largely drawn upon official documents, texts and statements of the governments. Documents such as Presidency programmes, background papers produced by representatives from the government in view of the Presidency term, speeches and statements as regards the Presidency period in general terms and the ND in particular, discussion papers and articles presented in the proceeding of the Presidency term, as well as documents over Presidency results have been critically analysed. These documents and speeches have been produced either in view of, during or after the end of the Presidency term. The views and position of the governments have thereby become visible.

As regards the general development of the ND from its launch up until its most recent developments, documents and discussion papers from the Commission and

¹ This is an appropriate analytical tool for empirical and comparative analytical studies (Berg, 2004:288).

other EU institutions, from various international conferences and meetings held in relation to the ND, have been examined.

In addition to these written sources, qualitative ‘informative’ or ‘expert’ interviews have been held from January 2002 to November 2003 with a number of persons involved in the development of the ND (Repstad, 1993:60; Holme & Solvang, 1991:110; Ejvegård, 2003:49).² In order to get the official view of the three Nordic governments with regard to Presidency ambitions and achievements, and their general opinion concerning the further development of the ND, interviews have been conducted with representatives from the three governments – mainly from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister’s Offices – and from the countries’ permanent representations in Brussels.³ The interviewees have all been in charge of the ND in the government administrations. Interviews have also been held with relevant officials from the Commission in order to get its official view as regards the development of the ND.

In order to secure an objective and unbiased description of the reality when it comes to the performance of the three presidencies and their contribution to the development of the ND, I have complemented the governmental documents and texts, as well as the interviews, with descriptions by other actors. Secondary sources have been consulted regarding the general development of the ND, which in many

² Informative or ‘informant’ interviews are suitable when the author is not able to directly observe a phenomenon. An ‘unstructured’ interview model was applied in order to restrict my influence on the interviewees as much as possible. No formalised questionnaire was used; the interviewees discussed the presented interview themes and questions freely and openly (cf. Svenning, 2000:105-106, 119-122; Berg, 2004:80).

³ In order to respect the integrity of the interviewees, their names are not presented in the text references. All have been given an individual number, and a description of the interviewees is found in the bibliography.

cases have a more critical perspective than official European Commission texts on the same topic.

In cases where the researcher has not experienced the phenomenon under scrutiny by him-/herself, it is fundamental to determine the trustworthiness and impartiality of employed sources ('source criticism'), which in this study are both written material and interviews (cf. Ejvegård, 2003:62). Consequently, I have throughout the study compared the data in several different sources in order to be sure of the reliability and credibility of the material.

4. STRUCTURAL INTENTION OF THE STUDY

I have in this study decided to label the EU's Northern Dimension as an EU-led 'composite policy regime' (see Chapter III). This definition has enabled an application of certain aspects of international regime theory. Regime theory has offered a useful analytical carpet for the purpose of this study, both as regards the ways in which the ND can be depicted and analysed, as well as for assessing the role of the Presidency as a regime actor in the development of an initiative in the Union's external relations. There is consequently a combination of elements from the field of International Relations and Comparative Politics: (1) international regime theory is applied in an adapted version to an initiative on the Union's foreign policy agenda and (2) the role of the Presidency in the EU policy-making process is assessed in the development of this initiative.

Chapter II addresses various theoretical approaches to EU research and contemplates those that have been applied to the ND. It is argued that a new approach is needed for the specific research topic at hand.

Before the operationalisation of regime theory through regime analysis, the study addresses the regime aspects embraced by the ND; the characteristics of the ND and its relevant regime principles, norms, rules and procedures. This is the task of Chapter III.

Regime analysis has facilitated a comparison between the presidencies as regards their priorities, content and implementation of the regime, their definition of and focus on various issue-areas and regime components, as well as planned and undertaken activities. The three presidencies are analysed separately in chapters IV, V and VI, and are thereafter compared in the first part of Chapter VII.

Chapter VII concludes the thesis in two sections. There is first a comparative analysis of the three presidencies. There is thereafter a concluding discussion on the general applicability and value of international regime theory for the analysis of the role of the rotating Presidency in the development of an EU foreign policy initiative.

CHAPTER II

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION RESEARCH AND THE NORTHERN DIMENSION

This chapter contemplates various theoretical approaches referring to how the European Union can be understood and explained, aiming to assess whether these can assist in the elucidation of the specific characteristics of the Northern Dimension on the EU's foreign policy agenda and in illuminating the role of the Presidency in its development. Existing deficiencies of current theoretical approaches *vis-à-vis* the research topic at hand and previous approaches to the description of the ND are addressed.

After an initial discussion on the general tendencies in contemporary EU research, the ND and the role of the Presidency is illuminated from various theoretical angles. Different scholars' description of the ND is thereafter looked at. The chapter is concluded with a general discussion on why a new approach is valuable.

1. THEORETICAL DEBATE ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

There has for some years been a debate among scholars regarding whether to locate investigations on European integration in the academic field of *International*

Relations or *Comparative Politics*. The former refers to relations, politics and integration *among* the EU member-states. It tends either to depict the EU as an international organisation, or to treat the process of integration as lying somewhere along a continuum between the polarities of nation-states (where member-states are the key actors) and suprastates (where supranational institutions are central). The latter field refers to politics and policy-making processes *within* the EU system of governance. Hix (1999:5, 364) argues that despite the EU's *sui generis* character, it can still be considered a complex political system with elements and processes comparable with those within a national system of governance (see also Risse-Kappen, 1996:57 ff.).

Whether it is feasible, constructive or constraining to differentiate between these two fields in EU research is frequently discussed, and many consider it fruitful to bridge the 'gap' between them (cf. Rosamond, 2000; Hix 1996, 1999; Risse-Kappen, 1996; Burgess, 2000). Various theoretical approaches to the EU are often interlinked and productive connections can be made between them. Instead of drawing rigid dividing-lines between them and basing the general explanation of European integration on a single theory, it is often more constructive to borrow elements and factors from several different approaches (Hurrell & Menon, 1996:386-389, 400). Moreover, certain approaches cannot easily be located in just one of the two fields due to their somewhat fuzzy borders. One such example is 'federalism' and 'confederal consociation' (see below), which deal with a potential EU federation (suprastate), whilst simultaneously applying national models of governance to the EU case.

A visible weakness in both theoretical fields is the tendency to view the EU as a closed system. The focus is often on the internal process of integration, whilst ignoring international events and pressures, the EU's regional context, its enlargement and foreign relations that have weighty impact on both the structure, decision-making institutions, policy-areas and outcomes of the EU (cf. Hurrell & Menon, 1996:394; Hix, 1999:357).

2. APPROACHES IN THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Examples of current integration theories are functionalism, neofunctionalism, liberal intergovernmentalism, federalism and confederal consociation, and approaches to international regimes⁴ and regional integration.

In the Baltic Sea region, increased economic and security interdependence assists in the explanation of why actors seek joint problem solving through increased cross-border cooperation, the establishment of the ND and by giving a strengthened role to the EU in this part of Europe. There seems to be a *functionalist* element involved in the ND, which can be compared to Mitrany's (1943) approach emphasising that transnational institutions better can satisfy human needs and solve problems of public management, distribution, welfare and communication than national governments. First, common mainly soft-security challenges to human needs and welfare in the region have been recognised by the ND participants. Second, suitable means to

⁴ This approach is described in Chapter III.

jointly address these problems and to take advantage of the opportunities the region can provide have been identified, such as cross-border co-operation and co-ordination in various issue-areas. Moreover, the goals of security and political stability are pursued, above all, by economic means and by seeking long-term common interests (see also Wessels, 1997:274-275; Risse-Kappen, 1996:60; and the discussion below by Ojanen).

There is also a *neofunctionalist* element involved. The fact that co-operation could start in one or a few issue-areas and then be extended through a 'spillover' effect to other related fields when the benefits from co-operation become visible can be seen in the context of the ND. The number of interrelated issue-areas included in the framework approach has indeed increased since its launch (cf. Haas, 1958:291-292. See also Schmitter, 2004; Miles *et al.*, 1995:181-184). In neofunctionalist reasoning, national political and economic elites with self-interests can create political pressures for deeper integration, i.e., they could put pressure on the Commission to initiate and develop a certain policy. This aspect could illuminate how the pressure from national political elites, in this case the Finnish, Swedish and Danish governments, can contribute to the shaping of a new EU policy approach towards Northern Europe (cf. Rosamond, 2000:59, 80).

Although the applicability of some functionalist and neofunctionalist elements to the research topic at hand, both approaches present some apparent deficiencies. The functionalist approach seems to lack explanatory value as regards the specific role of the EU Presidency, the promotion of values and norms, and the visible governmental interests involved in the development of an initiative on the EU's foreign policy

agenda which the ND represents. Neofunctionalism has been criticised for its problems with high-politics spillover and its ignorance of exogenous constraints (cf. Moravcsik, 1998:15). In the field of foreign policy, the member-states play a vital role. Despite the fact that supranational institutions ensure the continuation of integration as underlined by neofunctionalists, in this field, however, the Council, its component members and its Presidency play a crucial role. The neofunctionalist emphasis on supranational actors could illuminate the important role of the Commission in the development of the ND (cf. Haas, 1958:291-292; Risse-Kappen, 1996:55; Hix, 1999:15). However, this would not be possible without the support of the member-states. Although having a strong explanatory value concerning the internal deepening and broadening of the integration process, it has its limits when it comes to international factors and external pressures on the EU (such as the fall of Communism), as well as in studies of EU foreign policy and enlargement, which are important elements of the research topic.

This lack of focus on the role of the Presidency in the development of the ND, on the national interests involved and on the position of member-states, makes a *liberal intergovernmentalist approach* appealing to illuminate (cf. Moravcsik, 1998:501, 625; Moravcsik, 1995:612. See also Hix, 1999:16; Puchala, 1999:319).

Public opinion, political parties and interest groups at the national arena have large impact on the formulation of a government's foreign policy, its preferences in relation to the EU foreign policy, as well as regards its chosen Presidency priorities. Negotiations often take place at two levels simultaneously; a 'two-level-game' (cf. Putnam, 1988). The key actors remain governmental elites and the focus is on

national preferences, which is comparable to the research topic at hand. Moravcsik (1998) argues that states pursue their interests within an anarchic environment that is circumscribed by supranational institutions. The national interests and presidential preferences of the three Nordic countries in focus are with this reasoning influenced by the supranational institutions.

Liberal intergovernmentalists stress that in the area of EU foreign policy, national and sovereignty interests are still strong and intergovernmental institutions are the most prominent (Hix, 1999:355). However, the Commission can be a highly influential actor when the historical imperative is strong and when member-states agree, which limits liberal intergovernmentalism (cf. Ginsberg, 1999:447). The Commission tends to co-operate and work together with the Council/Presidency in the area of the ND, which is an approach that liberal intergovernmentalism does not deal with. Moreover, the Presidency does not only promote national interests, but works in the interest of the Union as a whole, and the ND involves a number of internal EU policies. The liberal intergovernmentalist approach seems narrow in the explanation of the development of the ND, the particular role of the Presidency in this and when it comes to the responsibility attributed to non-state actors in the development and implementation of the ND. Whilst liberal intergovernmentalists focus on the history-making decisions, the day-to-day policy-making process is illuminated in this study.

Another approach to European integration is *federalism* (cf. Burgess, 2000; Burgess, 2004) and *confederal consociation* (Chrysochoou, 1997. See also Gable, 1998).⁵

⁵ Again, it is important to note that there is a divergence in views among scholars whether to locate these approaches in the field of Comparative Politics or in the area of International Relations.

Ginsberg (1999:441) argues that consociational features are present especially in the EU foreign policy field as this is operated by national political elites on the basis of consensus, helps to balance cultural diversity, produces outputs that often represent the lowest common denominator, and where intergovernmental institutions are dominating. The elite-elite interactions and their negotiations with the domestic society play a determinant role for policy outcomes within the Council negotiations. The approach encompasses the important role of the EU Presidency in reconciling interstate differences, which has gradually taken over the Commission's role as a mediator and policy-initiator (Chrysochoou, 1997:526). These elements are of relevance for this study. However, the role of supranational institutions in the EU foreign policy area is less illuminated in this approach.

Although giving explanatory value to the very nature of the EU and to the character of broader policy-areas, the input of federalism and confederal consociation in the analysis of the development of a specific EU foreign policy approach with the unique characteristics which the ND represents, is more limited.

3. APPROACHES IN THE FIELD OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Approaches to European governance are those focusing on EU policy-making, characterised by conflicts of a distributional nature, resource dependencies and nested games; new institutionalism; policy network analysis; and multilevel governance. These embrace a variety of actors, not only states.

Marks, Hooghe & Blank (1996:341-355) criticise the liberal intergovernmentalist state-centric approach and present *multilevel governance* (MLG) as an alternative model. MLG is seen as an approach, rather than a theory, which allows alternative theoretical accounts to explore it – both from the field of Comparative Politics and International Relations (see also Marks & Hooghe, 2001). Kux & Sverdrup (2000:238) argue that MLG not only is applicable to processes within the EU and across its internal boundaries, but also to its external relations. This makes certain aspects of the approach pertinent for my research topic. When assessing the co-operation dynamic in the ND region and the different actors implicated in the development of the initiative, a MLG approach could be applicable. The very fact that there are non-state actors involved in the implementation of the Northern Dimension Action Plan at various levels suggests that elements of MLG are visible.

Another approach in this field is *supranational governance*. One can from the perspective of Stone Sweet & Sandholtz (1997:299-300) argue that non-state actors' cross-border interactions in the ND region lead to an increased level of integration and supranational governance, and gives some explanation to why the EU has strengthened its presence in the region through the introduction of the ND. The transactions among different actors could be seen as becoming gradually institutionalised at the EU level of governance within the framework of the ND. In addition, the pro-integrative activity of supranational institutions, such as the Commission, is an interesting aspect in the development of the ND.

These two approaches might indeed give some impetus to the background conditions in the ND region and the multitude of actors involved at various levels in the

development and implementation of the initiative. However, whilst the governance approach treats the EU system as a whole, the research topic at hand deals with a particular EU foreign policy initiative, and both approaches represent some theoretical deficiencies for this study (cf. Jachtenfuchs & Kohler-Koch, 2004:114). MLG lacks some broader theoretical provisions in explaining the formulation of a policy approach towards the ND region. It has its limits when it comes to revealing the significance of intergovernmental institutions and national interests involved in EU foreign policy-making, in which the use of the co-decision procedure and qualified majority voting in the Council is more limited than in the Community pillar. The Commission's supposed autonomous influence over policy-initiation and the policy agenda is also limited in the foreign policy field. Here, the member-states play an important role.

The approach of supranational governance might better explain supranationality within the first pillar and the dominance of intergovernmentalism in the foreign policy field in general terms, rather than explaining specific EU foreign policy formulations and actions, which is relevant for this study. In addition, its explanatory value as regards the role of the Presidency in the development of an EU external relations' initiative is rather limited as the focus seems to lie on non-state actors' transactions and on the role of supranational institutions. Supranationalism is somewhat limited in the context of the ND, which also has significant intergovernmental characteristics.

In this field, there are further two theoretical approaches that deal with the relationship between 'actor/agency' and 'structure'.

A new institutionalist approach (cf. Bulmer, 1994; Bulmer, 1997; Pierson, 1996; Pollack, 2004) – rational-choice, sociological and historical institutionalism – can provide a helpful framework when studying the role of supranational institutions, such as the Commission, in promoting an EU policy towards the Baltic Sea region, and how this has implications on the member-states' preference formulation and actions. Institutions pose obligations on the member-states concerning how to conduct the Presidency, and they need to structure their national interests according to EU norms (cf. Hix, 1999:363). Moreover, the promotion of the ND by a specific Presidency has implications for political outcomes in the Council decision-making. New institutionalism can help capturing the role of values and norms, which are prominent in this study, and the very establishment of the ND can be illuminated from this angle. The approach could be interesting when examining how supranational institutions such as the Commission constrain or define the strategies of national political actors within the Council, the European Council and when chairing the Council.

However, institutionalists seem to be more interested in supranational institutions and their role in the integration process, and less in the intergovernmental institutions of the EU (see Pollack, 2004:142). The role of supranational institutions in the field of foreign policy to which the ND belongs, is more limited. In addition, whilst the core assumption of institutionalists is that institutions matter and are the focus of the analysis rather than actors and their behaviour, the opposite is the case in the study at hand. This last aspect makes it appropriate to address an 'actor-oriented' approach.

Policy network analysis is often used in the illumination of interactions between public and private actors at various levels in the EU policy-making process to solve collective action problems, in which advice, consultation and expertise are the means, and through which resources and information are exchanged (cf. Falkner, 2000:94-95, 112; Risse-Kappen, 1996:60). It draws attention to the actors involved in the policy process, along with their motivations and interests. Such an approach could be interesting as regards different actors' efforts to influence the Commission or the relevant Nordic policy-makers to shape or deepen various fields of the ND. It could also contribute to the identification of various actors involved in its general development along with their interests and motivations. However, the approach is likely to tell us more about how policies in the first pillar are determined than how EU foreign policy is made (cf. Peterson, 2004:129). Although sharing an actor oriented approach with the research topic at hand, this theoretical perspective seems to have its limits in explaining the formulation of EU foreign policy-making and specific foreign policy actions where national executives are the dominating actors (see, however, the discussion below).

4. THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE NORTHERN DIMENSION

Filténborg *et al.* (2002:387 ff.) have applied a form of *policy network analysis* to their description of the ND. They argue that the acknowledged involvement of external actors – non-EU members, regional organisations and IFIs – in the formulation, development and implementation of the foreign policy initiative of the

ND can be considered an EU 'network governance strategy'. This strategy brings in complementary resources (financial, technical, expertise) to the Union through a process of burden-sharing. EU foreign policy is in this case implemented through the resource-exchanges that take place between the EU and non-EU actors that are willing to coordinate their policies and resources with the Union in order to realise shared political and economic projects, and to address soft security risks. This increases the EU's capacity as a foreign policy actor as its fragmentation of decision-making rules (foreign policy competencies are spread across pillars and actors), conflicting national interests, and lack of technical/financial resources have negative effects on this very capacity.

As described by Ojanen (ed. 2001:218-219), the ND represents a *functionalist approach* to the EU's external relations. The ND is seen as a functionalist approach to cooperation – integration through concrete, joint problem-solving. First, a common definition of the problems to be tackled is achieved. Second, suitable means to tackle these problems are identified: cooperation and co-ordination, measures aimed at stabilising and improving living conditions in neighbouring areas, develop infrastructure etc. It encourages cooperation and deeper links between the actors in the region by using common concerns as an incentive for cooperation, whilst simultaneously tackling the problems by using the willingness to cooperate as an incentive. The ND has similarities with Mitrany's ideas about functional cooperation starting from the fields of low politics; economic and social cooperation also with non-members. However, Ojanen acknowledges that there are some problems involved in the functionalist approach regarding the implementation of the ND. There is no simple functionalist cooperation between governments; instead, there is

cooperation between governments, formal and informal institutions, EU members and non-members, and other actors at various levels which have different rights and responsibilities. The ND is therefore seen as an approach that blurs the usual demarcations between actors and the usual patterns of decision-making.

Other scholars have in the same volume contributed to the conceptualising of various aspects of the ND, such as the *multilevel character of implementation* involved in the ND, labelled the 'multilevel approach to regional cooperation' (see Catellani, 2001:54 ff.), the '*soft*' *security characteristic* of the ND (see Archer, 2001:188 ff.) and seeing the ND as an *EU tool for building 'grey zones'* between members and non-members. The last approach means that the EU extends its influence and governance to those zones, but grants neither a full membership nor a European identity to them (see Palosaari, 2001:209 ff.).

Another attempt to conceptualise at least a part of the ND is Ojanen's (1999:16-17) depiction of the ND as a classical example of how member-states try to '*customise*' the EU. This means that member-states often try to make the best out of it, emphasising some features over others so that the Union would resemble themselves. The ND can be seen as the main instrument the Finnish government has used to customise the Union and to gain an understanding from others for Finnish concerns, in particular that of regional stability. Through the ND, Finland seeks support for its efforts to accommodate Russia, for its national policies, economic interests (energy, transport and investment) and security concerns (nuclear safety, environmental threats, organised crime and illegal immigration). The ND is seen as furthering Finnish goals and values (see also Ojanen ed. 2001:362).

These approaches to the ND are fruitful for the depiction of some of the distinctive characteristics of the ND, namely the involvement of non-EU actors at various levels in its formulation, development and implementation; the functionalist aspects involved; the promotion of national goals and values; its soft security nature; and its blurring of the boundary between EU-members and non-members. Several of these elements are accordingly included in the study.

However, neither of them presents a comprehensive approach regarding the depiction of the Northern Dimension as a whole and the promotion of various issue-areas, values, norms and interests included in its framework. Nor do they bring up the significant role of the EU Presidency in its development. Further, the relationship between the development of a 'structure' and the role of various 'agents' is not addressed in theoretical terms.⁶

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Several of the theoretical approaches presented above may be of relevance for elements of the research topic at hand. Indeed, there are functionalist, neofunctionalist and liberal intergovernmentalist aspects involved in this thesis, and a multilevel governance approach (especially regarding the implementation) and the 'actor-structure' dichotomy are visible characteristics in my research. However, none of the approaches presents an all-embracing approach for the illumination of the

central aspects in focus of this thesis. In addition, although some might address the EU foreign policy, as the ND does not represent such a traditional policy, also these approaches involve some shortcomings. For instance, they lack an explanation to the influence of non-EU actors on an EU foreign policy initiative.

So far, few theoretical approaches have been applied to the ND, even if the research agenda on this topic has increased in recent years (compare for instance with the important studies conducted by Ojanen and others). The few existing examples indeed bring up significant characteristics of the ND to some extent included in the study at hand. Nevertheless, an alternative approach is needed which can give us some explanatory value as regards the development of an initiative on the EU's foreign policy agenda that addresses and engages both EU and non-EU actors in its formulation, development and implementation, and which involves various policy areas. The approach needs to bring in the role of the EU Presidency in the development of such an initiative where both national and supranational interests are prominent, and where the framing and export of various values, policies and norms are important ingredients. In the following chapter, by the labelling of the ND an EU-led 'composite policy regime', an application of an adapted version of international regime theory might just constitute such a needed approach that could be valid for similar cases.

⁶ It is, of course, also valuable to examine theoretical approaches to other neighbouring areas in the EU's external relations. Insights from such studies have been incorporated in the following chapters.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Due to the nature of the research topic, my theoretical framework is based on a connection between international regime theory within the field of International Relations, and governance and policy-making in the field of Comparative Politics. The target is to put together a framework for analysis that suits the research area at hand, which should be applicable for an EU policy approach towards a neighbouring region and the actors that have been/are influential for its formulation, development and implementation.

In this chapter, the ND is labelled a ‘composite policy regime’ (see definition below) that includes a number of co-operation areas among the actors and institutions involved in the Northern Dimension context. This cross-border regime belongs to the EU’s external relations. Through this framework, certain EU norms, values and policies seem to be exported to neighbouring regions, in particular to Russia, but also to the candidate countries of the region.

With this definition and through the illumination of the regime aspects of the ND, certain regime theoretical mechanisms may be operationalised and regime analysis applied in my research. Regime theory is applied as a structured model for analysing firstly how this regime has been formulated, where the reasons behind its introduction and the priorities and content proposed for the ND by the relevant actors

are looked at; and secondly how it is implemented, where the focus is on proposed actions to be taken and on the concrete implementation of joint projects in the issue-areas covered by the ND.

Regime analysis is also applied – but to a lesser extent due to the ND’s rather young character and the time frame of the research – to whether the regime can be seen as efficient, if it is likely to remain, and concerning the prospects involved for its potential transformation and/or reproduction. It further assists in the comparison of different actors.

The intention is not to apply regime theory to the Union as a whole, which has been done in previous studies (see below), but rather to a selected EU foreign policy approach towards a specific region that addresses and involves both members and non-members.

This study focuses on the EU Presidency as a regime actor, chaired by three member-states located in the ND region. As the case studies deal with the role of a certain actor in the Union’s external relations regarding the formulation, development and implementation of a regional EU initiative which simultaneously can be labelled a ‘composite policy regime’, both ‘agency’ and ‘structure’ are important elements. As regards the actors, regime theory contributes with focusing on their role in *regime-building*, whilst its variant *regime consequences and effectiveness* emphasises the role and effects of the structure (Arts, 2000:514; Levy *et al.*, 1995:278 ff. See further the discussion below). In sum, the role of the Presidency in the development of the

ND can be assessed through regime analysis coupled to a comprehension of EU foreign policy-making.

Before regime theory can be operationalised through regime analysis, it is important to define the actual regime. *First*, the chapter consequently deals with how the ND can be described and in what way it is possible to characterise it as a ‘composite policy regime’. Its regime components are also addressed. *Second*, the role and functions of the Presidency in the EU’s external relations and its leadership potential in the Union’s approaches towards neighbouring regions (‘near abroad’) is treated. The Presidency is seen as a regime actor. *Third*, a number of sequential phases in the general regime-building process and the development of a regime are identified. *Fourth*, the role of the Presidency as possessing an important leadership function is linked to the development of an initiative and regime on the Union’s foreign policy agenda. *Finally*, the applied structure of analysis is presented.

1. THE NORTHERN DIMENSION – A ‘COMPOSITE POLICY REGIME’

The partner-oriented framework of the ND does not represent traditional EU foreign policy, despite constituting an external relations’ initiative. This is due to its geographical inclusion of some EU-members, its broad scope and connection to various internal EU policies, the active role of the ‘equal’ non-EU partner countries both in its formulation, development and implementation, along with the acknowledged potential of other regional bodies and IFIs. Member-states are usually

not addressed in foreign policy approaches and non-EU actors are traditionally not allowed to participate in the EU foreign policy-making process (cf. Haukkala, 2003:15 ff.. See also discussion by Filtenborg *et al.*, 2002:387 ff.).

The ND belongs to the EU's foreign policy field; a field which by definition is characterised by a separation between the 'insider' and 'outsider'. Despite this fact, the ND seems to focus upon common challenges, shared policies and values, as well as on jointly defined co-operation areas instead of differentiating between various kinds of countries in the region. It emphasises similarities among the countries and the benefits of co-operation in the region at the expense of rigid boundaries between EU-members and non-members. Common values, principles and norms could be seen as a uniting factor among the ND participants, instead of EU membership. In addition, various member-states can be seen as attempting to export specific policy objectives, principles and values to neighbouring areas through the framework of the ND. These elements could be framed by an application of regime theory.

As noted in Chapter I, in order to promote the common values of security, stability and sustainable development in the region, the participants have decided to co-operate in many different issue-areas. Hence, the ND is not a single-issue policy area in its own right. It is rather a broad multidimensional policy framework, involving a range of various policy areas, which is similar to the Union's pre-enlargement relations towards the eastern candidate countries. By using Sedelmeier & Wallace's (2000:429-430, 439) terminology, with this overarching character, it can be labelled a 'composite policy'. This description involves an analytical distinction between two dimensions of policy.

First, the *macro level* of policy. Here, the overall objectives, principles, broad framework and parameters of policy are described, including the direction for the cooperation and the policy instruments (policy framework and range of policy areas). At this level, policy-makers occupy positions at the top of the decision-making hierarchy within the relevant political system (national and EU) – i.e., the Commissioners, their cabinets and Directorate-Generals responsible for external relations, and the member-states' Foreign Ministry officials, foreign ministers and heads of government or state.

Second, to translate these objectives into substantive outputs requires a decision on what instruments to use and how to use them, which means more detailed decisions across a wide range of EU policy areas relevant to the ND. In other words, the macro policy is composed of a range of distinctive *meso policies*, which simultaneously are parts of other EU policy areas and share their instruments in order to achieve the objectives. At this level, the principal policy-makers are sectoral ones in both the Commission and the member-states, such as ministers from different policy fields.

Besides constituting a 'composite policy', the ND possesses several characteristics comparable to the consensus definition of international regimes as we will see in the following section, and can therefore be labelled an EU 'composite policy regime'. The regime is multidimensional as various issue-areas and actors are involved.

An EU policy regime approach has previously been used by Wallace (1999:290-291, 302; 2000:153; 2001:5) in her description of the functional, territorial and affiliational connections that exist between European countries. Her territorial

interconnectedness concerns internal and external security relations among neighbouring countries and the management of borders. The affiliational interconnectedness deals with shared values, identity, norms and societal relationships. Finally, the functional connections promote cross-border regimes to manage socio-economic public policy functions.

The last form of interconnectedness shows some similarities with this approach of looking at a specific EU policy initiative and its regime elements. The functional connections in Europe seem to be increasingly concentrated to EU 'policy regimes', but also engage a variety of other regional bodies and could involve both EU-members and non-members, which also is the case in the Northern Dimension. Wallace's policy regime represents co-operation in a specific field, such as water management, industrial facilities or aviation control management, sometimes promoted by the EU (Wallace, 1999:292, 303; Wallace, 2000:153).

However, whilst Wallace deals with one specific issue-area in her policy regimes, the ND covers a broad range of co-operation fields. A recent study made by Xenakis has in this respect a comparable approach. Xenakis applies regime theory to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, which is conceptualised as an embryonic multidimensional international regime. This aims at establishing linkages between political, economic and socio-cultural security arenas, and consequently involves many issue-areas. This regime remains weak in relation to the development of an identifiable set of norms but offers some general rules. In a comparison, the ND could be seen as a more developed regime, as cooperation in the Baltic Sea region

seems to be more extended than in the Mediterranean region (Xenakis, 1999; Xenakis, 2000; Xenakis & Chrysochoou, 2001:14, 108)

Within the 'composite policy regime' character of the ND (the macro policy level), a number of 'sub-regimes' might develop, which fits the description of the above-mentioned meso policies: one for environmental protection and nuclear safety, one for energy co-operation, another for combating organised crime etc. Indeed, such developing sub-regimes have been identified in the following chapters on the three Nordic presidencies, namely the 'Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership' (NDEP), the 'Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing' (NDPPS), and possibly also the 'Northern eDimension Action Plan' (NeDAP).

The ND cross-border regime comprises an area that extends beyond the formal membership border of the Union and embraces EU members, candidate countries and other non-EU members. It emphasises cross-border co-operation in various interrelated issue-areas with the general aim to strengthening soft security, stability and sustainable development in the region. Its soft security aim in the context of the EU's eastward enlargement could explain the multitude of issue-areas involved in the ND concept, not only one which in general is the case in regime analysis and which also is the case in Wallace's policy regimes. Although being built upon several developing sub-regimes and including various meso policies, one for each specific issue-area that might be studied separately, it is still possible to discern overall regime elements, which are valid for all the distinct issue-areas and which fit the composite character of the ND regime.

2. INTERNATIONAL REGIME THEORY AND THE NORTHERN DIMENSION

Whether or not the EU as a whole can be described as an international regime has been subject of some discussion. Many scholars have shown some scepticism about the fit between the EU and regime analysis. They claim that the Union with its legal personality, supranational elements and high level of institutionalisation is more than an international regime.

Breckinridge (1997:180 ff.) has however presented an alternative approach. By stressing that international organisations are embedded in regimes, he shows that regardless of what type of international organisation the EU is, there is a regime associated with it. He draws attention to the practices, rules and norms of the so-called 'Community Method' (the long-term reproduction of bargaining methodologies and package dealing within the EU institutions), which besides the persistence of basic unwritten membership rules, constitutes the basis for the EU regime.

However, instead of looking at the regime aspects of the EU as a whole, the focus here is on the regime elements of a specific policy approach that includes various issue-areas and actors in the external relations of the Union. Thus, the regime is limited in its scope to an area in the Union's external relations, and it is multidimensional, including a great number of issue-areas, as well as encompassing a large number of actors within and outside the EU (compare also with Wallace's and

Xenakis' approaches described above). Its particular characteristics makes it appealing to analyse.

International regimes are in general seen as intervening variables between the structure of the international system and the behaviour of actors. Crawford (1996:3) argues that

[t]he rising prominence, for example, of transnational issues like pollution, disease, weapons, proliferation, information flows, refugees, crime, drugs, finances, industrial production, and so forth, requires transnational policy responses. To the extent that these challenges can be met, only the supra-national forms of cooperation, coordination, and governance characteristic of regimes seem able to address them.

Whilst regimes do not seem to play a central role regarding issues where states individually can materialise their own interests, in the context of globalisation where security problems cross national borders, regimes are formed to overcome collective impasses through the co-ordination of actors' behaviour. Regimes are "something more than temporary arrangements that change with every shift in power or interests", and more than the following of short-run self-interests (Krasner, 1982:185. See also Xenakis & Chrysochoou, 2001:109).

The main purpose of the ND seems to correspond to a large extent with the general aim of international regimes. This is to strengthen the ability of their participants to co-operate in specific issue-areas by facilitating international agreements and to provide a guiding framework for joint problem-solving and horizontal co-ordination of the actors involved. The common theme across all issue-areas involved in the ND is the respect by the participants of shared principles and values. This shows

regimes' linkage to the functionalist focus on joint problem-solving through sector-specific international institutions. The ND framework regime seems to be based upon such functional linkages (see Chapter II).

Regimes are systems of rules and norms agreed upon by states to govern their activities and interactions in specific issue-areas. Regimes vary in terms of “membership, functional scope, geographical domain, complexity, administrative structure and stage of development” (Young, 1991:282). Issue-areas may be either wide or narrow. They are not neatly separated; developments in one issue-area often have substantial consequences for other issue-areas. Linkages between different issues are often produced, which could be compared to the neofunctionalist effect of ‘spillover’. This is visible in the ND (cf. Xenakis, 1999; Xenakis, 2000; Xenakis & Chrysoschoou, 2001:101, 109; Levy *et al.*, 1995:278-279. See also Chapter II).

Regimes are usually applied to systems of rules that oversee more specific agreements where rules are broadly defined. They constitute structures that govern well-defined activities, resources, and/or geographical areas of only some states. This could also be applicable to the ND. The ND is defined in official documents as a regional co-operation framework for EU, national and local policy initiatives, programmes and activities from both EU members and partner countries. As such, it can be considered a framework covering most – but not all – of the activities and programmes of the participants involved in the region within the specific co-operation areas that have been jointly defined.

Moreover, its scope of activities, its geographical area, as well as its number of partner countries are rather well defined. The Commission Communication on the ND sets out the challenges facing the region, identifies the areas where the EU could provide added value, and establishes guidelines and proposes operational recommendations for further activity in this area. In addition, regimes tend to arise wherever there are underlying cross-border transaction flows and where the level of interdependence is high among the participants; elements which are valid for the ND (Krasner, 1982:187, 196; Hasenclever, Mayer & Rittberger, 1997:16; Arts, 2000:530).

Whilst international organisations are material entities, possessing physical locations, offices, personnel, a common budget etc, institutions are social practices consisting of easily recognised roles coupled with clusters of rules or conventions, governing relations among the occupants of these roles. International institutions can be broken down into two subsets: international orders and international regimes. Breckinridge (1997:176-178) claims that international regimes can be seen as partial orders: they are valid for specific issue-areas (trade, money, arms control etc) rather than for the totality of the political relations among their members. This is the case in the ND. Despite dealing with a broad range of jointly defined issue-areas, which together build up its composite character, it does not cover the entirety of the existing political relations between the participants, and 'hard' security matters are explicitly excluded. Nor does the fact that not all existing political relations between the ND participants are included in the framework contradict its composite character (see Sedelmeier & Wallace, 2000:429; Levy *et al.*, 1995:274).

Regimes can have organisations associated with them and *vice versa*. International organisations monitor, manage and modify the operation and rules of regimes, and may have a role to play in their formation and implementation, as regimes do not possess the same capacity to act as organisations. What is interesting here is the relationship between the organisation and the regime. The Northern Dimension composite regime is dependent primarily on the organisation of the European Union and an important element of multi-actorness can be discerned. A variety of actors are involved in the formulation, development and implementation of the ND, not only the institutions and members of the EU, but also other regional organisations, non-EU members as well as non-state actors at various levels of governments, such as private firms, IFIs and universities (cf. Arts, 2000:515-516, 522-528; Wolfe, 1999:3; Hasenclever, Mayer & Rittberger, 1997:11 ff.; Levy *et al.*, 1995:279).

In general terms, states remain the primary actors in regime analysis. However, also non-state actors can have a similar influence on regime formulation and implementation as individual states. This is evident as regards the ND, which constitutes an EU-led initiative at the same time as other actors are involved in its development. Moreover, the actor in focus in this study – the Presidency – wears two hats and represents both national and supranational interests simultaneously. Hence, a multi-actor approach seems appropriate.

In Krasner's (1982:186) consensus definition of international regimes, they are described as

sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations. Principles are beliefs of fact, causation, and rectitude. Norms are standards of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations. Rules are specific prescriptions or proscriptions for action. Decision-making procedures are prevailing practices for making and implementing collective choice.

The four regime components – principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures – may for analytical purposes be divided into two sections. *First*, principles and norms provide the basic *defining characteristics* of a regime. They define the nature of the issue-areas involved and constitute the normative framework (*constitutive rules*). These are helpful when it comes to the actors' formulation of the regime, and emphasis on and definition of various issue-areas. *Second*, regime rules and decision-making procedures could be seen as the *instrumental part* of regimes, prescribing actions to be taken (*regulative rules*). They contribute to the carrying out of the regime principles and norms at a more practical level, and could therefore be stressed at the implementation of regimes.

According to Krasner (1982:187-189), amendments of rules and decision-making procedures are changes *within* the regime as long as principles and norms remain unaltered.⁷ However, changes in principles and norms are *changes of the regime itself*. Should principles and norms be abandoned, this would entail either a change to a new regime – regime transformation – or the disappearance of the regime from the given issue-areas. These changes should further be distinguished from the *weakening*

of a regime, which occurs if there is an incoherence among the regime components or inconsistency between the regime and related behaviour (see also Arts, 2000:531).

2.1 Regime Principles and Norms

Regime *principles* generally involve goal orientations at the level of general policy areas, like economics, security or the environment. Specific regimes are often embedded in larger systems of norms and principles (cf. Levy *et al.*, 1995:317). This seems to be the case with the ND regime. In general terms, the EU member-states hold some fundamental principles in common such as the commitment to democracy and human rights, the rule of law, freedom of the press, and market economy. These have led to the creation of a common set of rules. The EU is seeking to project the same principles and values externally in its international agreements in order to increase stability and security, and in many cases, issues of economic liberalisation are linked to a set of political principles.

Since the ND belongs to the Union's external relations, it is part of a broader system of principles, norms and general foreign policy objectives that the EU upholds in its relations towards neighbouring countries, such as the promotion of security, stability and sustainable development, liberal market economy, stable political development, the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. This contributes to an export of EU values and norms to neighbouring countries and regions, which gradually convert these regions into an area of economic and political EU influence. These

⁷ This, as many rules and procedures generally are in accordance with the same principles and norms.

broader principles and norms have also been more explicitly expressed in the second Northern Dimension Action Plan:

The Action Plan respects internationally recognised principles of sustainable development, good governance, transparency and participation, gender equality, the rights of minorities, and the protection of indigenous peoples. (European Commission, 10/06/2003:4).

Regimes may be classified in terms of their goal orientation. It is possible to distinguish regimes that serve mainly to increase the utility of regime participants in absolute terms (*internal* regimes), from those that seek to improve the position of members relative to outsiders (*external* regimes). The ND belongs to the former group (Levy *et al.*, 1995:276-277).

One of the more specific principles in the ND framework is that regional cross-border co-operation in a great number of areas among different kinds of countries – EU-members, candidate countries and other non-members – is seen as contributing to the values of increased political stability, security and sustainable development in the region. Through cross-border co-operation among a variety of actors, soft security risks – such as organised crime, illegal immigration, trafficking in human beings, money laundering, communicable diseases and environmental threats including nuclear waste – are seen as being weakened. Political stability, in terms of stable development of democratic institutions and the development of good neighbourly relations, is also seen as being promoted by cross-border cooperation.

In the process of enlargement, the establishment of new socio-economic and normative dividing-lines in Europe (in this case *vis-à-vis* Russia) as well as a

negative socio-economic development in one or several of the countries involved is coupled to increased stability risks. In addition, co-ordination among the EU's institutions, programmes and activities, across its three pillars, as well as among programmes and activities of different countries and international bodies in the region, is seen as improving the financial and institutional efficiency in the implementation, as well as being beneficial for the overall prosperity of the region.

The ultimate goal of the ND is to reduce all dividing lines. On the one hand, it aims at furthering stability and security, human rights, democracy, the rule of law, market economy, prosperity, employment, trade and economic co-operation. On the other hand, it aims at narrowing down the disparities in living standards, at removing obstacles to trade and investment, and at the accession of the countries to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Norms are defined as standards of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligations, guiding the actions of regime members so that collective outcomes can be produced. These are in accordance with the goals and shared convictions that are specified in the regime principles. They operate mainly on the level of issue-areas.

One norm in the ND is that non-EU countries in the region are seen as equals and have been granted an official status as 'partner countries'. Non-EU partner countries as well as other regional organisations involved in the region could be consulted as regards the further development and implementation of the ND. Moreover, as described in the Action Plan, the ND should be taken into account by relevant actors

whenever appropriate. An implicit norm could be that participants of the regime are expected to facilitate cross-border co-operation and work towards fulfilling the aims of the ND.

2.2 Regime Rules and Decision-Making Procedures

More specific *rules and regulations* convert the principles and norms into concrete prescriptions or proscriptions for actions to be taken. They are often stated explicitly in the formal agreements on which regimes are commonly based (see Hasenclever, Mayer & Rittberger, 1997:9-10). Rules are used both in the sense of ‘as a rule’ (regularity) and in the sense of ‘follow the rule’ (prescription), and they generally forbid, require or permit some action or outcome. (Levy *et al.*, 1995:271 ff.). It is claimed that actors follow the rules embodied in international regimes because of the functional benefits they provide.

The rules and regulations as regards the issue-areas involved in the ND and the financial instruments available are found in different agreements, such as the Europe Agreements (EA), the Europe Economic Area (EEA) agreements and the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA), as well as in the PHARE, TACIS and INTERREG documents. There are two documents which set up the more specific regulations associated with the ND regime. First, there is the Commission Communication on the Northern Dimension from 1998. Second, the Action Plan for the Northern Dimension (the first from 2000 and the second from 2004), which intends to promote the implementation of the ND in various fields. However, the

very first document for the implementation of the ND was the Council Conclusions ‘On the Implementation of a Northern Dimension for the Policies of the European Union’, from May 1999 (Council of the European Union, 31.5.1999). The Commission has further been given a leading role in the implementation of the ND (Council of the European Union, 12 June 2001:18).

Although some might consider the Action Plan almost a legal document in the context of the ND, it is important to notice that it officially constitutes a non-binding document, which rather should serve as a recommendation and incitement for co-operation between the partners (Feira European Council, 2000§1.55.76). The Action Plan can be seen as political document, building on existing agreements (the EEA, EA and PCA agreements) and setting out the over-arching strategic policy targets, common objectives, political and economic benchmarks used to evaluate progress in key areas, and a timetable for their achievement that should facilitate the evaluation of progress (see Council of the European Union, 2003§7).

Formal legal sanctions for a non-compliant behaviour do not exist explicitly in the ND, which however does not exclude potential social sanctions. Nevertheless, it is important to note that there is a sanction possibility involved in some of the programmes related to the composite regime, such as TACIS, the PCA and the Common Strategy on Russia. Some of the benefits included in agreements with non-members may be postponed and EU funds can be redirected from the intended areas.

Compared to other regimes, the rules seem to be of a more implicit character in the ND regime, whilst the principles are more explicit. One can also notice that in

generally speaking, regimes with strong compliance mechanisms are more likely to alter the behaviour of regime participants than those with weak monitoring, sanctioning and dispute-resolution procedures. The ND seems to concur with the latter description which has implications for its effectiveness (cf. Levy, *et al.*, 1995:279).

Decision-making procedures and programmes are practices for making and implementing collective choice. The ND was established on the EU's agenda through the internal policy-making procedures. However, once established, the foreign ministers' conferences are important for its development. One can therefore conclude that some participants of the regime have a greater influence on the development of the regime, than others, i.e., the non-EU members.

The Commission Communication on the Northern Dimension and its Action Plan are important documents underpinning the regime. However, they should not on their own be seen as constituting the ND regime. Various other documents are also included. All of the documents and agreements as regards the ND together constitute the regime.

The procedures involved for the further development and the implementation of the ND are still evolving. The ND belongs to the foreign policy field of the EU. The official decision-making in EU foreign policy, as in internal policy-making, takes place among the EU member-states; non-members do not participate and do not have a final say. However, it has been agreed that non-EU partner countries as well as other regional organisations involved in the ND co-operation areas could be

consulted in the policy-making process. The foreign ministers' conferences are important in this regard. The conclusions of these are not legally binding but they produce an important political dialogue among the ND partners. This shows the intergovernmental character of the co-operation among the countries involved.

Moreover, regional organisations contribute to the implementation of the ND. This constitutes a new element in EU foreign policy-making. As noticed above, EU foreign policy is in general not made in co-operation and consultation with non-members, and with the countries that are addressed in the specific policies. However, explicit procedures for EU negotiations with non-EU members, for substantial co-operation with other regional bodies, for the Commission's role in other international organisations and for a clear-cut division of labour in the ND context are still not entirely developed. These shortcomings have been acknowledged by the policy-makers in the region and some suggestions for improvements were included already in the 'Full Report on Northern Dimension Policies' from June 2001, and became developed and integrated in the second Action Plan.

The further promotion and implementation of the ND should take place within the framework of existing contractual relations (the EA with the three Baltic States and Poland, the PCA with Russia, and the EEA agreements with Iceland and Norway), financial instruments (PHARE, TACIS, Structural Funds/INTERREG) and regional organisations (the CBSS, the BEAC, the AC and the NCM).

* * *

To conclude, the regime components involved in the ND seem to be of a rather implicit nature, as opposed to explicit. It is also important to note that the argument here is not to equate in any deterministic manner the Northern Dimension process with a full-fledged and firmly established international regime, at least not in Krasner's broad definition. However, what I want to draw attention to is that there are a number of regime elements embedded in the ND – although some regime components might be stronger, others weaker – which makes it possible in combination with an awareness of its unique characteristics to apply an adapted version of regime theory. Regime theory is here adapted to the nature of the ND as being an EU-led 'composite policy regime' and to the role of the Presidency, seen as possessing a significant leadership function and accordingly constituting an important regime actor.

It is possible to argue that the continued existence of the ND framework is unlikely in the long-term if it does not become a system of patterned behaviour, generates a notion of rules of the game capable of guiding and, finally becomes capable of structuring international behaviour. The ND is still a rather young initiative, which in time might develop into a more complete international regime (cf. Krasner, 1982).

2.3 Definitional Imprecision Involved in Regime Theory

Since regimes are umbrella concepts, they can be difficult to define in a clear-cut way. Krasner's definition has been criticised for being vague and imprecise and that it is difficult to differentiate the four regime components. This also seems to be the

case in the application of regime theory to the ND: it is indeed difficult to clearly separate the various regime components and there seems to be some apparent interlinkages and overlaps between them. However, this is another reason why a regime approach is valuable for the general understanding of the ND, which shows an interconnectedness both as regards various issues and in the regime components.

The traditional definition of regimes generally focuses on co-operation related to one issue-area. This is not the case for the ND, which covers a range of different co-operation fields that together make it rather complex. However, my focus on its composite character avoids this 'single-issue dilemma' as it highlights the existing interconnectedness among various issues. This 'composite policy regime' approach further contributes to the alteration of the traditional focus of regime theory on just one issue-area.

Moreover, the scope and strength of regimes have been debated. The fuzzy concept of regimes implies that people mean different things when they use it. Whereas some consider a single written treaty already a regime, others believe that regimes are broader in scope, referring to entire issue-areas. The more regime participants one hopes to attract, the more general must be the scheme one hopes to advance. When Finland first launched the ND, this element was visible: by presenting an open and rather wide framework, all the member-states would find at least something they liked with the initiative (see further the discussion in Chapter IV).

Principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures are in turn subject to alternatively narrow or wide interpretations. A norm, for instance, implies anything

from an authoritative standard or model of behaviour, to, in its looser sense, a characteristic pattern in the behaviour of a social group. It is subsequently common practice for regime analysts to emphasise one element of the Krasner definition at the expense of another (Crawford, 1996:82 ff.; Arts, 2000:533).

Some have suggested dropping the complex consensus definition and replacing it by a more clear-cut but also tighter formulation that focuses solely on explicit rules, which would be less open to diverse interpretations (cf. Keohane, 1989:4). This narrow definition relieves the researcher from the burden of justifying his/her decision to call a given element a 'norm' rather than a 'rule', or even a 'principle'. This could be analytically helpful for my study since it is rather difficult to clearly separate the regime components as they are not explicitly stated in the relevant documents. However, as the rules in the ND regime seem to be more implicit in comparison to its principles, it seems more important to focus upon the totality rather than on the separate elements – in particular the rules – involved in the regime.

The consensus definition continues to have a large number of supporters as it imposes a certain structure upon the depiction of regimes, which facilitates a comparison of various regimes and issue-areas. Crawford (1996:83) holds that problems of definitional precision may be relatively unimportant, as some measure of imprecision is inevitable. How could one agree upon the definition of a field whose scope is in constant fluctuation, when this changeability is one of its principal characteristics? Moreover, Levy *et al.* (1995:273) claim that regimes' imprecision is not critical for purposes of identifying regimes, since differentiating among principles, norms and rules does not figure in defining regimes in the first place.

3. THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENCY IN THE EU'S EXTERNAL RELATIONS

This study deals with the role of the rotating EU Presidency in the development of a regional initiative and a regime – the Northern Dimension – on the Union's foreign policy agenda. It is seen as an actor in regime analysis. Hence, it becomes vital to illuminate the actorness and leadership function of the Presidency in the EU's external relations.

First, it is relevant to address the ways in which the Presidency may have an impact on EU foreign policy-making in general terms. Under which circumstances is it possible for the Presidency to influence the EU's political agenda; how can the Presidency be seen as an agenda-shaper in the Union's external relations and which are the limitations involved as regards its room of manoeuvre? Second, the role of the Presidency in the Union's external relations is linked to a discussion about its role in regime analysis. Does the rotating Presidency possess an important leadership function for the development of international regimes?

3.1 Presidency Functions

In the Treaties of Rome it was agreed that the Presidency of the Council would rotate among the member-states on a six-month basis, but no precise tasks were mentioned. All member-states, despite of their individual size and resources, were acknowledged the same right to chair the Council. This six month period is considered being

sufficient to achieve certain policy objectives but not too long to allow abuse of the term of office.

The role of the Presidency has developed through the years, and today, one no longer talks about that each member-state is chairing the Council, but the Presidency is seen as a subject or actor with its own willingness and capacity to act, not least in the field of the Union's external relations (Wurzel, 1995:32; Sherrington, 2000:41-45). The actorness of the Presidency and its influence on the EU's foreign policy-making process is visible through its four interlinked functions in the work of the EU: (1) administration and management; (2) policy initiation and agenda-shaping; (3) mediation and consensus-building; and (4) representation.

3.1.1 Administration, Management and Co-ordination

Administration, management and co-ordination is the Presidency's more traditional responsibility. Here, the task is primarily to prepare, prioritise, organise, chair, manage and co-ordinate all the meetings at the various levels of the Council machinery (working groups, embassies in third countries, COREPER, Council of Ministers, European Council). The Presidency sets up time-tables, holds press-conferences, writes conclusions and must sign all minutes and adopted proposals. Through this function, the Presidency can more easily make its voice heard in the Council negotiations, which increases its chances to influence the foreign policy-making process (cf. Elgström, 2003a:2-5).

Although there might be an agreement among the member-states that action is needed in a specific issue-area, it is not rare that they come to the Council negotiations without clearly established preferences. This could be due to either a lack of time to work out national preferences, or on purpose because of domestic political considerations. There is also an uncertainty among the member-states as to what kind of deal that might be attainable, since there is a lack of information about the others' preferences. This also increases the Presidency's room of manoeuvre.

Success in this role – and the Presidency's actorness in the EU's external relations in general terms – depends to a large extent on its ability to manage its tasks in an efficient way. Its efficiency and success is dependent on factors such as previous experience of holding the Presidency, general diplomatic familiarity, its attitude towards the integration process, and its domestic structure and situation, as well as the size of the country concerned (access to resources, administrative capacity, organisational skills, international status and contact network). It is for instance easier for larger member-states to internationally be considered coercive and powerful as a Presidency, which can be advantageous. However, smaller countries often have an advantage in seeking compromises between the members and acting as neutral brokers. Success is also dependent on the will and ability of the participants in the negotiation to compromise as the Presidency seldom possesses any powers to impose an outcome (cf. Wurzel, 1995:38; Tallberg, ed. 2001:20-25; Bengtsson, 2002:216; Svensson, 2000:16 ff.). As the role of the Council has increased through the years, it now organises more meetings and it is often assisted and advised by the Council Secretariat-General.

3.1.2 Policy Initiation and Agenda-Shaping

It is in general the Commission that is responsible for initiating political proposals, especially in the first pillar. However, as the Presidency in its administrative role decides schedules and submits bases for discussion, it has acquired a day-to-day opportunity for initiating proposals, setting political priorities and shaping the agenda.

Since 1975, the Presidency has an explicit possibility to launch its own political priorities for the work of the Council and to put forward both European and national interests for furthering the integration process in various fields. These priorities are defined in its Presidency programme at the beginning of its term in office, and are often presented in official programmes, position documents or speeches.

It is generally expected that the Presidency sets priorities for its term as this is linked to its leadership function both in internal EU matters and as regards the other member-states, as well as in the Union's international relations. This gives it some room of manoeuvre. Some member-states might use the Presidency for domestic purposes (in order to heighten public awareness at home and/or promoting specific national interests), others as a means to promote current European issues (such as the enlargement or the single currency).

Although a lack of formal powers in the EU treaties, the Presidency has several means to influence EU policy-making along with national preferences and interests through its agenda-shaping possibilities. The system is widely accepted as it rotates

and offers all the member-states the same privileged opportunity. According to Tallberg (2003a:5; 2003b:21), it may contribute to agenda-shaping by launching new political initiatives on the agenda (*agenda-setting*), through prioritising, de-emphasising or shaping various issues that already are on the agenda, ensuring that an issue is kept on agenda also after its term in office and through its capacity to structure ongoing debates (*agenda-structuring*), and by actively excluding issues from the agenda through its blocking powers (*agenda exclusion*).

Variations in national preferences, particular interests and general attitudes towards the integration process affect the behaviour and activities of the presidencies and also lead to differences regarding what issues they introduce, accentuate, de-emphasise or neglect (Svensson, 2000:21-22; Tiilikainen, 2000:26; Tallberg, 2001:14 ff., 154-155; Ruin, 2002:42-43; Wurzel, 1995:18 ff.; Elgström, 2002a:184).

As regards *agenda-setting*, the Presidency can shape the political agenda by drawing attention to problems thus far neglected in the integration process and initiating a debate on how these may be defined and addressed. Such issues may be included in the Presidency programme. Moreover, it may set the theme of informal meetings that take place in the home country at any level in the Council machinery. In its role as the external representative of the EU, it may pay particular attention to regions, countries or problems hitherto not dealt with in the EU, which it prioritises. As the Presidency controls the agenda of formal meetings, it can select which unexpected external events that needs the Union's attention, and which do not. In addition, the Presidency can develop concrete policy proposals for action in response to recognised concerns when the Presidency believes the time is ripe for these. It can in

some fields act on its own (in the intergovernmental field), in others in close cooperation with the Commission (in the supranational domain).

The political leadership and role of the Presidency as a policy initiator is especially evident in the intergovernmental second and third pillars where the Commission has either a shared right of initiative with the Council, or no right at all, in which case this role has been attributed to the Presidency. Its role is, however, more limited in the first pillar where the Commission has monopoly on proposals (Tallberg, ed. 2001:13-14; Bengtsson, 2002:214; Sherrington, 2000:43-44; Svensson, 2000:11, 203 ff.). Finally, the Presidency can try to develop new institutional practices that structure future cooperation and decision-making (Tallberg, 2003a:7-8).

Concerning *agenda-structuring*, a member-state may in its Presidency programme decide either to prioritise or downplay specific issues that already are on the political agenda and structuring it in accordance with national preferences. This means that the influence and room of manoeuvre of the Presidency is not limited by the fact that a large extent of the issues on the agenda are determined prior to the Presidency term, which many argue.

Member-states may structure the agenda on the basis of different regional priorities in the EU's external relations (the Mediterranean region, the Black Sea region, the Baltic Sea region and former colonies), different socio-economic and environmental interests (some issue-areas or aspects of different issues are considered more important by some, less by others), and different constitutional priorities (promotion

of the enlargement process and preferences as regards institutional reforms) (Tallberg, 2003a:9; Tallberg, 2003b:26).

Other important ways to influence the political agenda is by determining the frequency of meetings within a policy area, convening informal meetings regarding issue-areas or domains it deems important (with the exception of European Council meetings), and structuring the agendas of formal meetings (issues to include in the agenda, issues that need debate, the order in which they should be treated etc) (Tallberg, 2003a:10-11).

Concerning *agenda exclusion*, the Presidency may exclude issues from the agenda to keep the focus during its term on its prioritised issues. Some issues may be conveniently 'forgotten', others more openly excluded for strategic reasons, with the explanation that there are time and resource constraints. Some issues (or unexpected internal or external events) may not be recognised as problems that need a common EU solution, and some decisions on subjects it has an aversion to may be postponed by its presentation of impossible compromise proposals (Tallberg, 2003a:11-13).

The influence of the Presidency on the EU's foreign policy-making is, however, also in some cases limited. Unpredictable international events and crises that occur such as the fall of the Berlin wall, the wars in former Yugoslavia and the outbreak of the mad cow disease often demand immediate attention. This reduces its room of manoeuvre and possibility to emphasise issues of national concern especially in the field of external relations. In addition, the short term in office limits the results the Presidency may wish to achieve. Many discussions are initiated during the

Presidency, whilst concrete implementation and the adoption of launched initiatives and activities may take place at a later stage after its term in office. Some also argue that it is more difficult for smaller member-states with fewer resources to influence the Union's agenda, compared to larger members. However, this does not always have to be the case (cf. Miles, 2002b:132-133; Elgström, 2003a:2).

Moreover, the Presidency is in many areas dependent on the Commission for information and advice. The segmentation of the Council may also affect the influence of the Presidency. In addition, in the Presidency's role as policy initiator, it is expected that the Presidency is neutral and an impartiality norm has been institutionalised in the Presidency handbook, although not being legally binding (Council Secretariat, 2001:5-6). The Presidency is expected to launch priorities that benefit all the Union and not only its own national concerns, to search for compromises without taking into account its own interests, and to represent the Council's joint interests both internally and externally. However, it is still possible to advance national priorities and convince the other member-states by presenting them as being compatible with Community interest.

It is often difficult to establish the full extent of the promotion of national interests during a Presidency term as many of the presented priorities are compatible with the majority view or the view of the Commission. In addition, a certain degree of promotion of national interests is accepted – as long as not exaggerated – since all members have the same opportunity when chairing the EU.

3.1.3 Mediation and Consensus-Building

In its role as a mediator, problem-solver and consensus-builder, the Presidency should conduct the Council negotiations so that decisions can be taken. The negotiations both within the EU machinery as well as at intergovernmental and some international conferences often follow the same structure: discussions start around papers produced by the Presidency with concrete proposals in various issue-areas, which in general are concluded by a Presidency defined compromise text. The Presidency is seen as a more neutral actor than the Commission which often has its own specific interests in the negotiations, and it is expected to act as an honest broker, treating all member-states the same (Elgström, 2003b:39).

As it is the task of the Presidency to formulate the text in the Presidency conclusions, the wording it uses reflects national concerns and preferences. Moreover, since problems that occur during European Council negotiations often are solved by the Presidency, this also gives it a large room of manoeuvre to make its preferences heard in the presented compromise. Finally, as the Presidency has the mandate to lead the negotiations, this also affects the bargaining outcomes. Thus, the Presidency is not always as neutral and impartial as it might seem (cf. Elgström, 2003b:51).

There is a dilemma as regards the role of a 'mediator' and that of a 'leader'. The Presidency is expected to be efficient and to assume a leadership role in order to propose cooperation and ideas to other member-states, and inventing solutions to managing bargaining obstructions. However, should the Presidency in its role as a leader aim for efficiency and do it utmost to achieve desired outcomes by

pressuring member-states thus risking upsetting members with conflicting interests? Or should it highlight in its role as a mediator the importance of consensus and try to find broad compromises among the majority of the members thus risking to lose efficiency? (cf. Svensson, 2000:14-15, 27; Elgström, 2003a:13; Council Secretariat, 2001:6).

3.1.4 Representation

The Presidency represents the Council both in the Union's internal institutional structure towards other EU institutions and externally in acting as a spokesperson for the EU in international organisations and towards third countries. The Presidency participates in the dual leadership of the EU – where leadership is divided between the Commission on the one hand, and the Council of Ministers and the European Council on the other – by managing the intergovernmental part of the EU machinery and representing the EU in CFSP matters (see also Elgström, 2003a:7).

External representation is a function of increasing importance. Besides the Presidency, the Commission (especially its Commissioner for External Relations) and the High Representative of the CFSP are significant actors in the EU foreign policy-making process, which also represent the EU externally. Their respective role is not crystal-clear as it depends on the issue-area at hand. The role of the Commission is for instance larger in the external economic relations, than in the political and more intergovernmental field of external relations.

The Presidency has a prominent position in the CFSP. In legal terms, the Presidency represents the Union within this field and acts as its spokesperson, and is responsible for the implementation of decisions. It co-ordinates the member-states' positions at international conferences and negotiations, and leads the EU side in enlargement negotiations (Council Secretariat, 2001:55-62; Bengtsson, 2003:57). However, the role of the Commission has increased also in this field, in which it has a shared right of initiative. In addition, the Presidency is sometimes dependent on the Commission for information and advice.

The role of the High Representative is to conduct political dialogue with third parties at the request of the Presidency and to assist the Council and its Presidency in CFSP matters as regards the formulation, preparation and implementation of decisions. Yet, the representative may simultaneously, under certain circumstances, carry out similar tasks as the Presidency (cf. Council Secretariat, 2001:7; Bengtsson, 2002:215-216; Svensson, 2000:18; Bengtsson, 2003:64).⁸

As regards the Northern Dimension, in its 'high politics' features, such as the Common Strategy on Russia and the PCA, the Presidency plays an important role. However, concerning the implementation of the Action Plan, the Commission has a central position, and it therefore becomes important for the Presidency to co-operate with the Commission in order to increase its chances to influence the agenda. It is also important to get the support of the other member-states, and of the non-EU partner countries in the ND area.

⁸ The Presidency and the Commission are important actors in fields that are planned and organised in view of the specific Presidency term and where co-operation schemes already exist. The High Representative is significant for sudden events or crises (cf. Bengtsson, 2002:216).

In sum, the Presidency makes up the representational focus in CFSP matters, which gives it large possibilities to influence the Union's external agenda if there is a willingness and capability. The willingness of a government can at least partly be discerned through its presented list of Presidency priorities and its achievements.

3.2 Future Role of the Presidency

How the future role of the Presidency will look like remains to be officially decided. However, in the draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe presented by the European Convention in July 2003, the role of the rotating Presidency has fundamentally changed. An elected President for a term of two and a half years has replaced the current role of the rotating Presidency of the European Council. The role of the new President is to chair and drive forward the work and ensure the proper preparation and continuity of the European Council. It shall facilitate cohesion and consensus, and ensure the EU's external representation in CFSP matters (European Convention, 2003, article 21).

An EU Minister for Foreign Affairs⁹ has replaced the chairmanship of the Presidency in the Foreign Affairs Council. However, the Presidency of other Council formations will continue to be held by member-states' representatives within the Council, but the Presidency period has been extended from six months to a period of at least a

⁹ A Union Minister for Foreign Affairs should be appointed by the European Council, being one of the Commission's vice-presidents. S/he shall conduct the CFSP on a Council mandate and be responsible for external relations in the Commission (European Convention, 2003, article 27).

year. It is also stated that “The European Council shall adopt a European decision establishing the rules of such rotation, taking into account European political and geographical balance and the diversity of Member States.” (European Convention, 2003, article 23).

If adopted, these changes will fundamentally alter the role of the rotating Presidency and reduce its position in the field of the EU’s external relations. This will probably have effects on the ND and other regional initiatives on the Union’s foreign policy agenda. However, if endorsed, it will take some time before these changes become operative.

3.3 The Presidency – an Actor in Regime Analysis

The EU Presidency can be seen as one actor among several involved both within and outside the EU – such as the Commission, partner countries, regional organisations and IFIs – in the ND regime-building process. Non-EU actors can have an important role to play in its implementation phase. However, as the ND is an EU-led framework regime, it is rather evident that their influence on the policy process could not be as significant as that of EU actors.

As noticed, the Presidency can be considered an actor with both national and supranational interests and priorities. It might promote the interests and priorities of the actual member-state but must simultaneously act in the interest of the Union as a whole.

There are two relevant contexts for the actorness of the Presidency in the EU's external relations. *First*, the national foreign policy context influences the priorities and activities of the Presidency. Member-states may have different strategies for their individual Presidency term, which could be connected to the general structure of their national foreign policy.

Second, the general direction of the Union's foreign policy agenda, which makes some areas more important to highlight than others, also influences the Presidency priorities.¹⁰ There is for instance a general tendency in the EU to emphasise cross-border co-operation in the context of enlargement, which could legitimate the Presidency focus on the ND during its term in office. These two contexts also explain that some matters on the list of Presidency priorities might be of more national concern, shaped and defined along with a general basis in the country's national foreign policy, and others of a more general European interest.

The Presidency activities and launched initiatives concerning a certain area of the EU's external relations differ between the member-states due to differences in national priorities, interests and motivations. The chairing member-state often tends to promote projects, relations and initiatives *vis-à-vis* countries and regions where it has some national interests. Regional EU approaches in its external relations often benefit from the Presidency of the member-states of that region, but also from the actions of these member-states in the general Council negotiations. The EU is developing a particular form of 'subsidiarity' in its foreign policy-making, accepting

¹⁰ National and European foreign policies are, of course, interlinked. EU foreign policy influences the direction of member-states' foreign policies, and *vice versa* (cf. Kux & Sverdrup, 2000:238).

that the member-states most concerned of for instance a particular regional approach formulate, develop and implement this (often together with non-EU policy-takers in the area, in close cooperation with the Commission). This requires their lobbying on the other members and the Commission to outline the overall priorities of such an approach (cf. Filtenborg *et al.*, 2002:390, 395). Southern member-states are most engaged in the Mediterranean region (Portugal, France), northern member-states in the Baltic Sea region (Finland, Sweden, Denmark), and former empires in their past colonial regions in Africa and Latin America (Portugal, France, Belgium) (Elgström *ed.*, 2003:11; Tallberg, 2003b:26).

In more concrete terms, the Barcelona Process (BP) has benefited from the Presidency of southern member-states, and one might argue that the promotion and development of the ND is somewhat dependent on the leadership of Nordic presidencies. Although there should be a continuation in the EU's foreign policy agenda despite different chairmen, it is still common that various issues on the political agenda are highlighted by different presidencies, which also is expected by the other member-states.

Other variations in the Presidency priorities and initiated activities are due to unforeseen external events that might have an immediate impact on its performance and orientation, and to the fact that certain issues already have been put on the Presidency agenda by earlier EU decisions. Previous Presidency conclusions often give clear guidelines to activities succeeding presidencies should emphasise.

4. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

As above-mentioned, common values, principles and norms could be seen as a uniting factor among the ND participants, instead of EU membership. The ND can be considered a framework concept for priority setting among the actors involved and it can be understood as an arena where member-states are attempting to export specific policy objectives, principles and values to neighbouring areas. These elements can be framed by an understanding of regime analytical mechanisms and the role of the actor in focus in these – the EU Presidency.

Regime analysis is appropriate for two levels of analysis in this study: First, for the general examination of the ND initiative, its regime elements and development (some of which we have seen above); second, for the analysis of the role of the Presidency as a regime actor, and for the identification of the priorities, motives, interests and activities of the three separate presidencies.

In general terms, regimes can be seen as intervening variables located between, on the one hand, basic causal factors which also explain the development of regimes, such as power, interests and values and, on the other, outcomes and behaviour (Krasner, 1982:185 ff.). This gives birth to two questions: *First*, what is the relationship between these basic causal factors and regimes; in other words, how do actors formulate regimes and intend to implement them? *Second*, what is the relationship between regimes and related outcomes and behaviour; what implications do regimes have on actors' behaviour? These questions and the general relationship

between 'structure' and 'agency' are important for the operationalisation of regime theory.

The focus in regime analysis is often either on the *regime-building process*, or the *regime consequences and regime effectiveness*. The former approach often emphasises the role of 'actors' and their actions in the formation of the regime, and has for a long time been the focal point in regime analysis. The latter has gained territory in recent years and gives prominence to the 'structure' and its effects and constraints on the behaviour of actors.

In this thesis, the regime-building process is at the locus of attention. As the focus here often is on the role of *actors* in connection to the structure, this suits my analytical approach in assessing the role of the Presidency for the development of an initiative on the EU's foreign policy agenda. The study at hand constitutes an actor-oriented approach as it highlights the role of agents in the general development of a structure (regime). In addition, the ND is an ongoing process and still a rather juvenile initiative. Hence, it is difficult at this stage to discern and evaluate all its potential effects and results, and to once and for all establish whether it can be seen as efficient or whether perceived changes would have happened also without it. This is only possible in a long-term perspective. Its potential effectiveness is therefore not in focus.

However, regime consequences/effectiveness cannot be entirely excluded from the analysis as they can be seen as important intervening variables for the ongoing regime-building process. Regime consequences/effectiveness may, for instance,

serve as a catalyst for actors' decisions on the further development of the regime, which can be related to *regime reproduction* and *regime transformation* – two phases in the regime development process defined below. This approach is therefore initially defined, before we turn to the focus of the analysis – the regime-building process.

4.1 Regime Consequences and Effectiveness

Regime consequences concern the actors' expectations and reactions to the international regime and how regimes operate to help society manage international problems. Do regimes serve the goals that led to their creation and do they influence outcomes? Does the regime make a difference, affecting the behaviour of actors so that agents implement or act in accordance with regime principles, norms and rules, which in turn increases co-operation in the actual issue-areas? One needs to assess the performance of the regime. Is the regime seen as efficient, or is it in need of a change?

Effective regimes affect the behaviour and interactions of actors and contribute to the management of targeted problems. Networks of regimes that link the same set of participants tend to influence actors' behaviour more than when regimes are isolated. This could be the case in the Baltic Sea region where a number of cooperation schemes co-exist, not least the CBSS (cf. Levy *et al.*, 1995:268-269, 291).

If the actual international regime performs its prescribed functions, contributes to the solution of identified problems and hence is seen as efficient by the actors, it is likely

to persist (even if the overall relations among the participants deteriorate). So, if cross-border co-operation is enhanced in the Baltic Sea region thanks to the ND, and if it is seen by the participants as strengthening security, stability and sustainable development in the area, as well as efficiently addressing existing challenges, the chances for it to remain on the agenda are high, and it might be reproduced in other regional settings (see discussion below).¹¹ This is also the case if the main actors conceive the regime and cross-border co-operation as important, and support it and act in accordance with its principles, norms and rules.

The real evaluation of a regime's effectiveness involves a comparison with what would have happened if the regime had never existed, which requires a demonstration of the causal links between the operation of the regime and the behaviour of the relevant actors. Hence, it is difficult to assess whether changes that occur are a direct effect of the existing regime, or if they would have happened also without the regime. Actors often try to address problems they deem are serious through a variety of means and activities, including some that do not directly involve the regime (cf. Levy *et al.*, 1995:288-291, 308). Thus, even if the Northern Dimension composite regime seems efficient in that cooperation is increased in the addressed issue-areas, this change might have taken place also without it through other cooperation structures.

The main actors might also see the ND as a 'paper-regime' – a regime that exists solely on paper and does not really affect the behaviour of actors in a positive manner and which fails to solve the problems for which it was created. This would

¹¹ The continuing existence of a regime might be called *internal* regime reproduction. The application of the cooperation scheme in another international setting might be called *external* regime

be the case if the participants do not adhere to the regime norms and rules, and where the decision-making procedures are weak. If some of the main agents ignore its potential and the officially agreed actions to be taken, and if it is seen as inefficient and that it does not really contribute to increased cross-border co-operation in the region, the ND regime might lose its significance and it will probably not be reproduced. It might remain a 'paper-regime', it might be modified or transformed and strengthened (see below), or ultimately disappear (cf. Levy *et al.*, 1995:288 ff.; Arts, 2000:531-533).

4.2 The Regime Development Process – Regime-Building

As regards the second broad field in regime analysis – regime-building or regime formation – this approach encompasses the reformation of existing institutional arrangements as well as the creation of new regimes. The more efficient a regime is expected to be, the more positive earlier regime experiences have been, and the higher the 'issue-density', the more likely it is that a new regime is established. As the ND can be seen as an ongoing process, the concept of the 'regime development process' is here used as synonymous to the 'regime-building process'.

Processes of regime-building are often mediated by existing regimes (issue linkages), which may constitute frames of reference (cf. Arts, 2000:514, 518, 533; Levy *et al.*, 1995:278 ff.). Possible related regime processes and cooperation schemes both in the region as well as in other parts of Europe that might have guided and influenced the

reproduction (cf. Arts, 2000).

formation of the ND regime are identified in Chapter IV, such as the EU Baltic Sea Region Initiative, the CBSS activities, and the Barcelona Process.

Both state and non-state actors may have a role to play in regime formation. A regime may be self-generated, negotiated or imposed. A *self-generated* or *spontaneous regime* may emerge through some process of converging expectations among actors and does not require conscious regime-building efforts. A *negotiated regime* arises from a conscious process of negotiations in which the parties try to define common provisions to incorporate into an agreement. It is negotiated on the basis of routines, intentions and motives (Arts, 2000:530). An *externally imposed regime* is at the outset an arrangement favoured by a single powerful actor – or a small coalition of powerful actors – that succeeds in convincing others to agree to its preferences. Although one of these three processes generally dominates regime formation, elements from two or all of these processes may be visible (Levy, *et al.*, 1995:281-282; Krasner, 1982:196).

In connection to these variations in regimes, three driving social forces can be crystallised in the process of regime-building. First, the *power-based*, or the realists which focus on the importance of power for the formation and the impact of international regimes. In their view, states compete for military power and regimes may be supplied or more or less ‘enforced’ by hegemonies. This can be connected to the *externally imposed regime*.

Second, the *interest-based* or the neoliberals which analyse constellations of interests, problem-structures and interactive decision-making. They stress (self-)interest and goal-seeking as a motive for co-operation among actors and for the

creation of international regimes. Actors create international regimes in the search for joint gains and to solve common problems (Levy *et al.*, 1995:284). This can be linked to the *negotiated regime*.

Third, the *knowledge-based* or the cognitivists which focus on asymmetries of knowledge, communication and identities as explanatory variables. Consensual knowledge and social learning are important factors in the processes giving rise to international regimes, and researchers often play a significant role. This approach is by some called the *political economy approach* (cf. Krasner, 1982:203; Arts, 2000:520; Hasenclever, Mayer & Rittberger, 1997:1-2, 29-37, 39, 43; Crawford, 1996:89-102). This can in some cases be connected to the *spontaneous regime*.

Hence, regimes are formed and developed by actors on the basis of elements such as interests, the search for joint benefits, power structures and the distribution among actors of capabilities and resources such as military capacities, economic strength, leadership, knowledge and authority. This distribution makes some agents more successful than others in achieving outcomes (Arts, 2000:530-532).¹²

In this thesis, the regime seems to be based on negotiations. Especially actors' interests and their search for joint gains explain the degree of co-operation between them and are important factors that lay behind the formation and development of the regime. The focus is here on the national interests that were behind the formulation of the scope of the ND, and on the priorities the governments had and concrete actions they undertook during their respective Presidency term in order to develop

¹² As interest groups, NGOs, transnational firms, epistemic communities and international organisations in general possess fewer resources than state actors they are often less powerful.

and promote various aspects of the ND. Elements from the neoliberal approach are thus visible.

Neo-liberals view 'agency' to be prior to 'structure' and they distinguish a range of relevant agents who are behind the formation of a regime. There is less concern about structural constraints. They also account for some actorness of non-state actors. These elements go well with my approach.

Despite this focus, it can be noted that also aspects from the realist approach are discernible, for instance when it comes to the 'transfer' or 'export' of Union values, norms and principles to non-EU countries embraced in the Northern Dimension framework. As discussed earlier, the EU often links economic liberalisation to certain political conditions in its international agreements. The ND partner countries are affected by this. In addition, as the ND by definition constitutes an EU policy regime, although highlighting the aspect of cooperation at equal footing, it would be rather logical if it reflected the EU common interests more than those of the partner countries. Consequently, the EU is the most influential party. Aspects from the knowledge-based approach and various research institutes might also have played a certain role in the regime-building process.¹³

In the regime-building process it seems possible to identify a number of stages or phases which go well with my approach of looking at the Presidency as having an

¹³ One might for instance discuss the role of the Finnish Institute for International Affairs and the Institut für Europäische Politik in the ND regime-building process. As early as in 1997, they launched a joint research programme on the ND, which has resulted in 17 books on the topic and, in their own words, the establishment of an "epistemic community" (Heikka, 2003:6).

important leadership function in the development of a regime.¹⁴ In the development process of a regime, first the regime is formulated, second it is implemented, third – sometimes based on considerations as regards the regime consequences and regime effectiveness – a regime might be reproduced or transformed. This can be seen as the sequential development of a regime. Hence, there is a certain regime development process with various phases, which however not necessarily looks the same in all regimes.

The first phase in the regime-building process is here called *regime formulation*. It includes agenda formation and institutional choice. The second stage is *regime implementation*, or operationalisation, which covers all activities needed to transform an agreement on paper into a functioning social practice. Moreover, in assessing the performance of the regime, other phases *might* be visible in the development of the regime, namely *regime reproduction* and *regime transformation*.

Some of the regime phases are more relevant and further emphasised than others in this study. In each of these phases, the focus lays with the role of the Presidency, as this is the relevant regime actor. It has both national and supranational interests, motives and intentions that contribute to the definition, promotion, development and implementation of the ND regime. Hence, the phases in the regime development process are in this study closely related to the strategy, activities and initiatives undertaken by each respective Presidency. The focus is on how actors define the ND and decide to shape the ‘composite policy regime’ and its components in various

¹⁴ These phases might also be studied separately (cf. Arts, 2000).

texts, speeches, interviews and other documents. Thus, regime analysis assists in the explanation of variations in the presidential approaches and activities.

4.2.1 Regime Formulation

Regime formulation includes agenda formation and institutional choice (cf. Levy, *et al.*, 1995:282-283).¹⁵ *Agenda formation* involves the emergence of an issue on the political agenda, the framing of an issue for consideration in international forums and the rise of the issue to a high enough place on the institutional agenda for priority treatment. This can be related to the initial launch of the ND, the presented challenges in the region and the important role played by the Finnish government in marketing the initiative.

Institutional choice takes an issue from the point where it becomes a priority item on the international agenda to the point of agreement on the provisions of a specific regime. This is when the ND became an official EU policy approach.

In this phase of the regime development process, the regime actors – in this case the Presidency – contribute to the definition of the issue-areas concerned, as well as the regime components, i.e., the principles, norms, rules and procedures that together characterise the regime. In regime processes, some actors stress certain values and principles at the expense of others, which also is the case for the Presidency. The relevant agents that stand at the basis of and are addressed by the regime are further identified.

Relevant questions to ask in this phase are whether the ND was coupled to other regime experiences; what were the motives, interests and intentions of the actors behind the formulation of the regime; how was the regime established on the EU's agenda, and how did the actors perceive the regime components and issue-areas involved?

4.2.2 Regime Implementation

Regime implementation, or operationalisation, is the second stage involved in the regime development process. It covers all those activities and projects required in order to transform a regime that exists on paper into a functioning social practice; to fill it with concrete substance.

Regime implementation concerns how the regime actors intend and decide to implement the regime, and how the regime is implemented in concrete terms through joint projects and activities in different sectors. It concerns the practical carrying out of the common objectives, principles and values. It could for instance involve the setting up of international organisations responsible for the implementation of review mechanisms, to make periodic decisions about the operation of the regime, to handle financial matters and to deal with various administrative tasks (cf. Levy, *et al.*, 1995:282-283). There is therefore a direct link between this phase and the regime component of decision-making procedures. In order to make progress as regards the implementation of the regime, it may be more effective for stronger actors to assist

¹⁵ Levy *et al.* treat 'agenda formation' and 'institutional choice' as two separate phases in regime-

weaker ones in for instance their capacity building, rather than through threats or sanctions forcing them to comply with the terms of the international regime. Regimes often redistribute issue-specific resources among their participants, something which is the case in the ND (cf. Filtenborg *et al.*, 2002:387 ff. in Chapter II).

Concerning the ND composite regime, what is relevant here is to analyse how the regime actors intend to implement the regime so that stated goals are to be achieved, and how the implementation phase is promoted in concrete terms through joint initiatives. The key document for the general implementation of concrete project in the ND area is, as we have seen, the Action Plan.

4.2.3 Regime Reproduction and Regime Transformation

Whether the regime is considered effective or not can, as noticed, be considered a catalyst to the phases of *regime reproduction*¹⁶ and *regime transformation*. If the regime is seen as effective and as being implemented in a well-organised manner, the regime model could be used in other international contexts as well. A new regime is formed. However, this precondition is perhaps not always the case. It also seems possible that a new regime is reproduced although the one on which it was based is not perceived as very efficient. Related to the ND, this stage in the regime development process would mean that the cross-border co-operation model of the ND is applied in other regional contexts or ‘dimensions’ in the EU’s external relations to neighbouring countries.

building.

¹⁶ Arts (2000) describes regime reproduction as the continuing existence of a particular regime, coupled to its perceived effectiveness. This can be seen as *internal* reproduction. Instead, I focus on *external* reproduction.

If the ND regime is perceived as ineffective, if it does not change the behaviour of the actors, if the circumstances linked to its formation alter (such as the enlargement), or if the external challenges are disappearing, the regime might be transformed. Its focus could for instance potentially change towards the internal EU policies, the relations with Russia and/or the 'Arctic Window'.

As previously noted, if regime rules and decision-making procedures are developed or amended, these are changes within the regime, and do not affect its focus and character as such. However, if the principles, goals or norms of the regime are altered, this affects the status of the regime and contributes to its transformation. A regime transformation might arguably also occur if one believes that the regime has been implemented as much as is possible and that it has reached the purpose for which it was founded. One might also discuss whether a *partial* regime transformation could take place. In this, the regime principles remain largely unaltered. However, the focus, orientation and circumstances for the regime may change.

4.3 The Leadership of the Presidency and the Regime Development

Process

The Northern Dimension can be seen as a negotiated regime. According to Arts (2000:517), in such regimes, five conditions need to be met for the delivery of concrete outcomes: (1) *joint gains* – all parties should be able to win something; (2)

leadership – the regime needs to be organised on a regular basis; (3) *knowledge* – the problem, the solution and the distribution of costs and benefits should be known among the participants; (4) *integrative bargaining* – the atmosphere should be positive and free of ‘power games’; and (5) *compliance mechanisms* – the parties should be able to trust each other and not become ‘free riders’. Especially the second condition is interesting in the relationship between the Presidency and a developing regime on the EU’s foreign policy agenda.

Young (1991:281 ff.) argues that political leadership is a decisive determinant of a successful or failing regime-building process. He identifies three forms of relevant leadership: *structural*, *intellectual* and *entrepreneurial* leadership. The *structural leader* represents a party (state) that is principal in the negotiation process, often advocating institutional arrangements that suite the interest of the specific party. The *intellectual leader* relies on the power of ideas to shape the thinking of the principals in processes of institutional bargaining, and may or may not be associated with a recognised actor in international politics. The *entrepreneurial leader* uses negotiating skills to influence the manner in which issues are presented in the negotiation process and to shape mutually acceptable deals. It may or may not represent one of the stakeholders in the negotiation process.

In accordance with its main functions, the Presidency can in the context of regime-building be seen as an ‘entrepreneurial leadership’. It functions as (1) *agenda-shaper*, outlining the form in which issues are presented for consideration at the international level, (2) *populariser*, drawing attention to the importance of relevant issues, (3) *inventor*, formulating innovative policy options to overcome bargaining

impediments, and (4) *broker*, making deals and collecting support for the most important options. However, as the Presidency represents one of the member-states, also elements of a 'structural leadership' might be visible when it comes to its opportunity to advocate national concerns.

One might argue that a regional initiative and a regime on the Union's external relations' agenda is dependent on the leadership of the rotating Presidency; perhaps especially on the leadership of a member-state adjacent to or geographically located in the particular region. As previously noted, some claim that the Barcelona Process has benefited from the presidential leadership of southern member-states. As regards the ND, this argument does not seem too unfeasible (cf. Marin, 2003:43 ff.; Haukkala, 2001:108). The Nordic presidencies have shouldered the responsibility for convening recurrent foreign ministers' conferences that gather all the ND partner countries. Non-EU partner countries have during these events been given equal means to participate and influence the discussions as EU-members.

The leadership of the Nordic presidencies can be seen as essential for the development of the regime, not least in giving active guidance to the Commission in the preparation and implementation of the Action Plan (cf. Patten, 11-12 November 1999; Halonen, 11-12 November 1999). The foreign ministers' conferences and other meetings have been organised on a regular basis. Based on the conclusions from these meetings, the ND regime has developed and action plans have been formulated. The meetings with all ND partner countries, organised by the Nordic presidencies – often in cooperation with the European Commission – have proven vital for the further development of the regime.

Through its various functions, the Presidency has further a particular position in the EU policy-making machinery to develop and promote a particular initiative on the Union's agenda (see the discussion above). Various issue-areas of the ND and different regime components can be highlighted by the Presidency in its leadership function. Through its focus, initiatives and activities during the six months in office, a particular foreign policy initiative can be developed in various ways. Together, these elements makes the Presidency an interesting and appropriate actor to analyse in the development of an EU-led regime.

It has been argued above that the development of an international regime and the regime-building process may proceed from one stage to another. First, a regime is formulated. Second, it is implemented. Third, a regime might also be reproduced and/or transformed. The regime development process affects to some extent the performance of the Presidency as a regime actor, at the same time as the individual Presidency might have some influence over the orientation of the regime-building process. Despite the fact that the overall course of regime-building continues throughout the three presidencies in focus, each Presidency may stress some phases in the regime development process at the expense of others. Here, we will see again how the particular status of the Presidency as an actor with 'dual hats' influences its performance and activities.

The activities of the Presidency in the development of the ND depend to some extent on the actual time period for its term in office and in which phase the ND is situated in the regime development process. If it has already been decided within the EU

(perhaps by previous European Council guidelines) that the general focus should be on the regime implementation phase, the Presidency that takes over office needs to focus on concrete initiatives and projects in order to fill the ND framework with concrete content. As the role of the Presidency is to represent the interest of the Union and to promote the general integration process, it has to adapt to already decided topics. Many of the tasks on the Presidency agenda have been decided by previous EU decisions, which influences the activities of the Presidency in the field of the ND.

A government might also decide to take advantage of its position as chairman and through its various Presidency functions emphasise for instance the phases of regime transformation or regime reproduction. It might make an effort either to apply the Northern Dimension model of co-operation in other regional settings, or to transform the goals, principles and orientations of the regime. This is based on the general national interests and priorities of the government as regards the development of the ND, which has effects on the orientation of the development of the regime.

Hence, the performance of the Presidency and its launched initiatives and activities depend both on decisions already taken among the EU institutions and on national interests it is trying to promote within the EU machinery in its position as chairman. These two variables also explain variations between different presidencies when compared.

Various governments may also define the ND regime, its components and issue-areas involved in their own ways, which becomes visible in the comparison of different

presidencies. Governments may promote various issue-areas, define them in different ways and have divergent geographical focus in the general regime-building process. They may stress some regime actors at the expense of others, and highlight to various extent the decision-making procedures of the regime. Through the comparison of three presidencies within the same time interval, it is possible to analyse different phases in the development of the ND composite regime.

4.3.1 Shifting Focus on Regime Components and Number of Issue-Areas in Various Phases of the Regime-Building Process

As regards a 'composite policy regime', one might expect the Presidency as a regime actor to behave in a particular manner *vis-à-vis* the regime components and issue-areas involved depending on the actual phase of the regime development process.

When it comes to the *formulation of the composite regime* at hand, it seems possible to argue that it would be logical if the regime actors were to focus on the horizontal approach in order to give prominence to the totality of issue-areas involved. This strengthens the composite character of the regime. This goes hand in hand with keeping a focus on the defining characteristics of the regime one intends to build, and, consequently, giving the principles and norms included in the regime a high profile. In this context, it is also important to define the nature of the issue-areas involved. Because of the focus on the defining characteristics of the regime, the other regime components – decision-making procedures and rules – may at this stage of the regime-building process be less emphasised.

When the regime development process has proceeded to the *implementation phase*, one might expect the regime actors to give strong emphasis to the decision-making procedures and rules of the regime as these components assist in the concretisation of the regime. These constitute the instrumental part of regimes, setting out actions to be taken and guiding the concrete implementation of joint projects. At the same time, actors might find it strategically rational to restrict the number of issue-areas in focus. With a limited focus, concrete results might be easier to detect and to achieve. However, a restricted view on the number of issue-areas in focus also has effects on the composite character of the regime. If exaggerated, this very quality might be weakened. Moreover, as the regime at this stage already has become an established practice, one might decide to focus less on the defining characteristics of the regime – the principles and norms involved.

When it comes to the *reproduction and transformation of the regime*, one might expect, again, a stronger emphasis on the principles and norms concerned, as well as a wider focus on the number of issue-areas involved. This, as regime reproduction gives birth to, or at least intends to build a new regime in another international setting, based on the actual regime. If a regime is transformed, it becomes important to stress the defining characteristics of the regime. Regime principles and norms are in focus as an alteration of these components stands at the very basis of a regime transformation. Regime rules and decision-making procedures are less stressed.

The reasoning above might be illustrated by the following figure:

Figure 1. Phases in the regime development process and related focus on the number of issue-areas involved and various regime components.

	<i>Regime Formulation</i>	<i>Regime Implementation</i>	<i>Regime Reproduction and Transformation</i>
Number of Issue-Areas	Many	Less	Many
Principles and Norms	High	Less	High
Decision-Making Procedures and Rules	Less	High	Less

In sum, in the regime formulation phase, one might expect the regime actors to give emphasis to many issue-areas involved, having a high focus on the regime principles and norms, and a lesser focus on the decision-making procedures and rules. In the phase of regime implementation, one might expect a focus on a more restricted number of issue-areas involved, a lesser focus on the principles and norms, but a high focus on decision-making procedures and rules. Finally, in the phase of regime reproduction and transformation, one might expect again an accent on many issue-areas, a high focus on the principles and norms, and a lesser focus on the decision-making procedures and rules.

4.4 Structure of Analysis

Regime theory offers a comprehensive approach, both as regards the ways in which to analyse the ND, as well as for assessing the role of the Presidency as a regime actor in the development of an initiative on the EU's foreign policy agenda. Regime theory takes into account both the role of structure (regime) and that of agency (participating actors), as well as the relationship between institution (regime) and organisation (in this case the European Union). Both the policy-making process that takes place between EU-members and non-members and the role of other international organisations that take part in the development and implementation of the ND are embraced.

Before operationalising regime theory through regime analysis, it is vital to address the regime aspects of the ND, which largely has been done in this chapter. A general definition of relevant challenges in the region, the scope of the initiative and involved issue-areas is undertaken. Moreover, the characteristics of the ND regime – the relevant principles, norms, rules and procedures – are identified. The main actors involved in the formulation and implementation of the ND are examined, along with the main actors that are addressed by it.

Concerning the role of the Presidency in the regime-building process, regime analysis facilitates a comparison between different presidencies as regards their priorities, definition, content and implementation of the regime, as well as planned and undertaken activities during their six months in office. It assists in the explanation of differences in focus and achievements during their Presidency terms.

The way in which the relevant Presidency describes the issue-areas concerned; whether some issues – or elements of a specific issue – are more emphasised than others, will be looked at. The definition of issue-areas involved in the regime may vary between different member-states.

The interests, priorities and motives of the Presidency regarding the definition and content of the ND will also be examined. The relevant Presidency might have its own definition of the regime, its components, scope, principles and values. Do they see the four regime components in different ways? Some actors and organisations involved in the regime could further be more emphasised than others. There will also be an analysis of what planned and undertaken activities and projects related to the implementation of the ND the Presidency managed to put forward, and on how it intended to contribute to the development of the ND after its term in office.

The three presidencies are analysed separately and thereafter compared in the first part of Chapter VII. The analysis of each Presidency follows the same structure. *First*, there is an examination of the Presidency's room of manoeuvre as regards its influence on the EU's foreign policy agenda. *Second*, it is relevant to analyse how the Presidency perceives the issue-areas involved and defines the regime components; important aspects in the general regime-building process. The view of the Presidency here is coupled to its general national interests towards the ND. *Third*, there is an evaluation of the stage of the regime development process within which the Presidency is active and how this affects and determines the activities and performance of the Presidency, and to what extent the Presidency itself influences the progress of regime-building.

CHAPTER IV

THE FINNISH PRESIDENCY

In order to understand the development of the Northern Dimension during the Presidency periods of Finland, Sweden and Denmark – in particular the Finnish presidential approach – it is vital to establish the background to the creation of the ND on the EU's agenda. This chapter therefore begins with an analysis of the regime formation process that took place prior to the Finnish Presidency term. It deals with the Finnish launch of the ND, how it was influenced by other cooperation schemes and how it was transformed into an EU policy approach. Thereafter, the chapter addresses the Finnish Presidency and its approach, activities and achievements in the area of the ND.

1. INCEPTION OF THE NORTHERN DIMENSION INITIATIVE – REGIME FORMULATION

The Dublin European Council in December 1996 expressed an explicit support for increased regional co-operation in Europe – from the Arctic region to the Black Sea. The Finnish government interpreted this as support for developing regional initiatives in the Baltic Sea region. The 'Northern Dimension' that was launched by Finland can be related to the previous EU approach towards the Baltic Sea region developed during the mid-1990s, to the developing EU-Mediterranean cooperation

through the Barcelona Process (BP) – sometimes called the ‘Southern Dimension’ - and to the launched activities of the CBSS. Its timing was linked to the forthcoming Finnish Presidency period (see further below).

1.1 A Finnish Initiative

In September 1997, Lipponen noted in his speech at an international conference on the Barents region in Rovaniemi, that the Union had acquired a natural ‘northern dimension’ with the 1995 enlargement. Now, the EU needed a coherent and efficient policy for this dimension that clarified and addressed the economic, social and environmental soft security challenges – excluding traditional security policy – and generated activities to explore the opportunities existing in the region. Lipponen (12/11/1999) defined the basic principle as follows:

A policy for the Northern Dimension must be based on a definition of the Union’s interests in the region. The ultimate goal of an EU policy is peace and stability, with prosperity and security shared by all nations. To achieve this, we need a comprehensive strategy, an institutional framework and adequate financing arrangements to carry out our plan.

After the speech, the next step for the Finnish government was to anchor the ND in the EU’s political agenda in view of the Luxembourg European Council, which it managed to do through an intensive lobby campaign. At the outset, Finland found it imperative to get the support of the Commission for the initiative. When this support had been secured, it was important to obtain the backing from the member-states, not least the southern ones. An explicit link was therefore made to the BP. Finland

underlined the importance of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and hoped that this move would be met with supportive reactions from the southern members.

When Finland had succeeded in getting the support by the other member-states (largely thanks to its low financial profile), and once the ND had become an official EU policy approach, Finland found it possible and important also to involve the partner countries. These were therefore invited to a first foreign ministers' conference in Helsinki during the Finnish Presidency term (Interviewee 19, 08/03/2002).

In general, it is the Commission that comes with a new policy proposal. This was not the case with the ND, which makes it rather original although belonging to the field of external relations in which both the Commission and the member-states have the right to come with initiatives (Interviewee 2, 09/01/2002). From the very beginning, the Finnish strategy was to have the ND established on the Union's agenda prior to its Presidency period. If a policy approach of very strong national interest is presented during the Presidency term, this risks being criticised by the other member-states (Interviewee 1, 11/03/2002).

The ND is Finland's first political initiative as an EU member. The notion itself appeared in some form already in Finland's membership negotiations. At that time, the ND indicated the new elements and Nordic values that the Nordic countries Finland, Sweden (and Norway) would bring to the Union after accession, such as the Northern climate, the Nordic welfare state model, openness and transparency, equality and strict environmental regulations (see also Arter, 2000:677-682; Jopp &

Warjovaara eds., 1998:8-11). However, the 'Northern Dimension' concept was not mentioned at this point, neither the intention to make it a common EU policy approach (Interviewee 19, 08/03/2002).

Several geo-political and geo-economic factors could explain the origins of the ND. *First*, the EU membership gave Finland the desire to strengthen its western identity as being the only member to share a long border with a less rich, less democratised and less market-oriented Russia. Stable politico-economic development in Russia and its integration in Europe, especially in the areas of energy, environment and raw materials (oil and gas), was therefore seen as especially important for Finland. Finland could further provide added value to the EU-Russia relations thanks to its long experience of relations to Russia/the Soviet Union. *Second*, Finland, as a new and small EU member wanted to show activism and raise its profile in the Union's external relations. *Third*, the ND can be seen as a Finnish response to the Norwegian-induced BEAC, the Danish and German-driven CBSS and the Swedish acknowledged Baltic Sea policy and its pronounced role in the development of the CBSS. *Fourth*, a Northern Dimension would secure the EU's presence in the North also after the eastern enlargement and in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean relations. *Fifth*, The ND would permit Finland to hold on to essential elements of its foreign and security policy, especially confidence-building measures, within a Union framework. *Sixth*, the ND can be seen as an attempt to customise the EU. Finland aims at a Union that fits its goals and needs, such as its special climatic and demographic conditions. The ND would draw attention to these conditions (cf. Arter, 2000:682; Sains, 1999; Ojanen, 2000:362; Catellani, 2003:3 ff). *Finally*, the ND would allow the Finns and the Russians to be enclosed by the same set of rules,

within a multilateral framework. Without this initiative, the Finland-Russia relations and cooperation would continue to be of a bilateral character, based on two separate national systems of rules (Interviewee 14, 14/03/2002).

According to Ojanen (2000:365-366), there were three central principles that Finland wanted to export to the EU's foreign policy agenda through the initiative: cross-border co-operation, involvement of the partner countries in its development, and a multi-organisational approach based on the idea of internal EU co-ordination across various Directorate-Generals and synchronisation between different regional organisations.

In the delineation of the initiative, Finland accentuated the *north-east of Europe*, rather than the North of the EU, which meant that the focus was put on the Union's external relations, not on its internal policies. In addition, the term 'Northern' was used instead of 'Nordic' to emphasise the initiative's independence from the traditional Nordic co-operation and to allow for a broader geographical scope, namely more or less the same countries as within the 'Baltic Sea Region Initiative' (see further below). It further comprised the existing regional organisations in Northern Europe such as the CBSS, the BEAC and the AC, and the geographical focus was on Northwest Russia (see also Ojanen, 2000:362; Arter, 2000:680-684; Sains, 1999; Maestro, 2002:65).

The aim of the ND was to address challenges in the area, enhance the Union's international role in the region, bringing economic benefits, and strengthening the positive interdependence between the EU, Russia and the Baltic Sea region, as well

as integrating Russia into European and global economic structures. In order to achieve the aim, a great number of co-operation areas was envisaged, including a more efficient use of natural resources, safety of energy supply, environmental protection and nuclear safety, combating border problems such as organised crime, illegal immigration and drug trafficking, facilitating economic interaction through improving infrastructure and removing obstacles to trade and investment, as well as improving living-standards in the partner countries (Interviewee 12, 13/03/2002). ‘Hard’ security, military cooperation was explicitly excluded. Consequently, the ND can in a sense be seen as a ‘soft’ security regime.

At a Nordic prime ministers’ meeting in Malmö, Sweden, in June 1998, the ND was identified as one of the themes that the Nordic EU members would co-operate in promoting with an eye to the forthcoming EU presidencies of Finland (1999), Sweden (2001) and Denmark (2002) (Arter, 2000:692). The ND can thus be seen as a common Nordic value.

1.2 Related Co-operation Experiences

1.2.1 The Baltic Sea Region Initiative

The Finnish ND was in many ways influenced by the first EU approach towards the Baltic Sea region developed in the early and mid-1990s. The EU’s engagement in the region was marginal during the Cold War, but took off when the membership candidacies of Sweden and Finland were launched in 1990 and 1991. At an early

stage, long before their actual membership, Finland and Sweden, in concert with Denmark, tried to influence the Commission to adopt a more comprehensive regional Baltic Sea policy (cf. Knudsen, 2000:30). Consequently, in the mid-1990s, a number of Commission communications developed a distinct regional approach in the EU's external relations to the countries in the area.

The EU believed that its promotion of regional co-operation in terms of the development of common projects across its external borders would contribute to increased security, stability and good neighbourly relations. As a part of the promotion of cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, the Commission started to participate in the work of regional organisations such as the CBSS, the BEAC and more recently in the AC (cf. Meyer, 1998:51 ff.).

The first concrete document for the EU's regional approach was a Commission Communication delivered to the Council in October 1994, named 'Orientations for a Union Approach towards the Baltic Sea Region'. The Communication was presented in the context of the pending enlargement towards Finland and Sweden, the approaching negotiations on Europe Agreements (EA) with the three Baltic States, and in the context of the established relations with Russia through the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) and with Poland through the EA (European Commission, 25/10/1994).

The Communication was adopted by the Council in its 'Council Conclusions on the European Union policy *vis-à-vis* the Baltic Sea Region'. In this document, the Council calls for the Commission to prepare "a report on the current state of and

perspectives for the co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region” (Council of the European Union, DS 268 Rev.1, May 1995). The Cannes European Council in June 1995 reiterated the interest in such a report.

Consequently, the Commission presented a ‘Report on the Current State of and Perspectives for Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region’ at the Madrid European Council in December 1995. It is a document reflecting (a) the various existing and estimated contributions for the period 1991-94, and (b) an estimate of the indicative contributions foreseen for the Baltic Sea Region from different sources for the period 1995-1999 (European Commission, December 1995, COM(95) 609). In the report it is stated that the Commission as a member of the CBSS intends to develop a long-term based ‘Baltic Sea Region Initiative’ (BSRI), which was welcomed by the Madrid European Council in December 1995. Finally, the Commission Communication – the ‘Baltic Sea Region Initiative’ – was adopted in April 1996 and thereafter presented to the CBSS at its Conference in Visby, Sweden, on 3 and 4 May 1996. Especially Swedish lobbying efforts contributed to its successful launch within the framework of the then Swedish chaired CBSS, and the initiative included for the first time some innovative elements that later became visible in the ND initiative. It can be seen as a Swedish attempt to engage the EU more actively in the Baltic Sea region through the active participation of the Commission in the work of the CBSS (cf. Catellani, 2003:7-8).

The Visby Conference welcomed the Commission’s initiative. The Conference was concluded with the adoption of a declaration in which the participants – the EU Presidency and the President of the Commission, and the heads of government of the

11 CBSS member countries¹⁷ – called for more regional co-operation among citizens and in the areas of civil defence, economic development and integration, and environmental protection. They decided to set up a commission responsible for working out measures to combat organised crime and to hold regular summits (Bulletin EU 5-1996, Central Europe, Relations with the Baltic States, 1.4.49.).

The following Florence European Council in June 1996 reiterated the importance of “the effective implementation of the Union’s strategy towards the Baltic Sea region, among other things in relation to the need to further develop the Union’s relations with Russia.” (Florence European Council, 1996:I.14). An Action Plan for Russia and the BSRI were adopted.

There are several similarities between the previous BSRI and the ND launched in 1997. Hence, it seems possible to argue that the Finns were strongly influenced by the already existing Union initiative towards the region when forming the basis for the ND. Finland wished to accelerate, complement and speed up the EU’s activities in the Baltic Sea region, and add some more particular Finnish concerns, especially *vis-à-vis* Russia, to the existing regional approach (Interviewee 19, 08/03/2002; Interviewee 12, 11/01/2002; Interviewee 3, 13/03/2002).

The BSRI and the ND include almost the identical geographical area in their definition, even though the latter has a stronger emphasis on the Arctic regions and the Barents Sea area – the ‘High North’ – and the specific weather conditions here. Finland also decided to add Iceland as an actor in the Northern Dimension region,

¹⁷ The CBSS members are: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden.

which was not the case in the BSRI. The geographical scope is thereby broader in the ND, although the focus remains the same as in the BSRI, namely the Baltic Sea region (see European Commission, 25/10/1994).

Both initiatives aim to increase stability, security and prosperity in the region in view of the enlargement through enhanced co-operation across the EU's external borders in various fields and through a strengthened political dialogue with the Baltic States and Russia. Addressing soft-security challenges such as fighting organised crime, drugs trafficking and illegal immigration, and promoting public health and the respect of human rights, as well as taking advantage of common opportunities such as co-operation in the areas of trade, infrastructure, environment, energy and investment promotion, are two highlighted dimensions in both initiatives. However, the focus on democratic development and the respect of human and minority rights in the eastern part of the region is perhaps more emphasised in the BSRI, which can be explained by its launch more closely related in time to the end of the Cold War.

In addition, both highlight the role of the partner countries and other actors in the region. The development of the initiatives would be done in close collaboration with all the partner countries around the Baltic Sea, as well as with other donors and IFIs. One can note that already in the BSRI, the non-EU states are called 'partner countries' (European Commission, December 1995, COM(95) 609).

Neither of the initiatives requires additional funds. Increased coordination between the EU's financial instruments PHARE, TACIS and INTERREG is considered being needed and loans from the EIB are seen as an eventuality. Both also acknowledge the

necessity to improve the coherence and efficiency of all bilateral relations and assistance, as well as strengthening the co-operation and co-ordination between the different actors involved through a complementary regional approach in which the Commission wishes to play an active role. However, the role of the Commission seems to be somewhat more extended in the ND, and the BSRI can be seen as a less firmly established EU policy (European Commission, 10/04/1996. See also Bengtsson, 2000:374).

Both initiatives are based on a multi-layered approach that promotes all sorts of exchanges and co-operation between various actors at a multilateral, bilateral, regional and sub-regional level, as well as at an organisational level. The stated priorities for cooperation are further of a horizontal nature and both highlight the important role of the CBSS, which is given a recognised role in the management of EU external relations.

The specific link between the activities of the CBSS and the content of the BSRI can be explained by the fact that the Commission is a CBSS member, as the BSRI was launched within its framework (see further below) and as also the EU Presidency was present at its important Visby Summit. Thus, whilst the focus in the BSRI was on the CBSS, in the ND other regional bodies such as the BEAC and the AC are stressed to more or less the same extent, which also shows the ND's broader geographical scope (European Commission, 25/10/1994; Meyer, 1998:53-54; Christiansen, Petito & Tonra, 2000:412; Lucas, 1997:136).

1.2.2 The Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

Besides the BSRI, Finland also seemed influenced by the activities of the CBSS (cf. Filtenborg *et al.*, 2002:399) and the developing Euro-Mediterranean Partnership when formulating its initiative.

In March 1992, the Danish and German Foreign Ministers invited the Foreign Ministers from the three Baltic States, Finland, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and a member of the European Commission for a meeting in Copenhagen in order to strengthen the existing co-operation and cohesion in the Baltic Sea region, and to take a decision on the establishment of an intergovernmental organisation – the ‘Council of the Baltic Sea States’ (CBSS) (Council of the Baltic Sea States, 1992:I). The aim of this organisation would be to provide a regional forum for closer co-operation between the Baltic Sea states in order to strengthen the democratic and economic development (cf. Bengtsson, 2000:378).

There are many similarities between the ND and the CBSS, some of which can be explained by the above-mentioned link between the BSRI and the ND. The geographical scope is almost the same. However, whilst the CBSS entirely concentrates on the Baltic Sea region, the ND also addresses the Arctic regions. The countries that are geographically included in the ND are also CBSS members, even though the ND stresses that only certain regions of Germany and Russia are covered (see Council of the Baltic Sea States, 1992:I). As the Commission is a member of the

CBSS, this increases the EU's influence in this organisation and could also explain some of the similarities involved.

The ND and the CBSS have the same focus. Many of the challenges the ND aims at addressing are already treated within the framework of the CBSS, such as environmental problems, organised crime and health issues (see Council of the Baltic Sea States, 1992:II; Vollebaek, 11-12 November 1999). Both aim at taking advantage of the opportunities the region can provide through increased cooperation in the areas of trade and investments, infrastructure, education etc. Moreover, both stress the need for active participation by political decision-makers at several levels and they promote both public and private regional initiatives as long as they contribute to the general aim of cooperation (Council of the Baltic Sea States, 1992:III).

The CBSS is seen as an important regional actor in the implementation phase of the ND, and it has pronounced that it is ready to contribute to the development of practical cooperation in key areas. In 1999, the chairman of the CBSS, Knut Vollebaek, offered the services of the CBSS as a "useful tool and partner" (see Vollebaek, 11-12 November 1999). The relationship between the ND and the CBSS therefore seems important to address.

The CBSS can be seen as an established regional organisation with its own secretariat financed through member-state contributions, which is not the case for the ND. It helps delivering the common principles and values of the Northern Dimension regime as it takes an active part in the implementation of the ND, and through the

cooperation among the member-states in a number of fields, also covered by the ND. Some cross-institutional regime principles and values are thus visible. The CBSS has from its inception welcomed the ND and it contributes actively to its development, which can be seen through its recent written contribution to the second ND Action Plan (see Council of the Baltic Sea States, 2003).

When launching the ND, an explicit link was also made to the developing regional cooperation in the Mediterranean region – the Barcelona Process (BP). In the spring of 1997, Lipponen advocated that the cooperation in Northern Europe should be based on the ‘Mediterranean model’ and in a speech made by Finnish Ambassador Stenlund in relation to the first Foreign Ministers’ Conference, he argued that “the Union has its Southern Dimension, the Mediterranean policy ... The Northern Dimension has been a missing concept.” (Stenlund, 22/11/1999 and 01/12/1999).

Indeed, the BP was a blueprint for the ND. It was assumed that this kind of a common EU policy approach towards a particular region could and should be applied to the countries in the Baltic Sea region (cf. Maestro, 2002:64; Heininen, 2001:39). There are several similarities between the two regional processes, which makes it important to address the BP.

The BP – and the new Euro-Mediterranean Partnership – was launched during the Spanish EU Presidency at the Barcelona Conference in November 1995 after 20 years of intensive bilateral trade and development cooperation between the EU, its member-states and the 12 Mediterranean Partners (Xenakis & Chrysochoou, 2001:

57 ff.).¹⁸ France, Italy, Spain and Greece, and to a lesser extent Portugal, have strong national interests all over the Mediterranean basin, and they have all contributed to the development of the BP. This can be compared to the interest of the Nordic EU countries for cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. The BP and the ND were initially promoted by a member-state (Spain and Finland) and both became regional processes of the Union's foreign policy agenda to which other member-states of the region have contributed in different ways.

The main aim of the BP is to promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region. When the ND was launched by Lipponen in Rovaniemi, its initial goal and basic principle was more or less identical to this aim, namely to promote "peace and stability, with prosperity and security shared by all nations" in the region. Some of the foreseen cooperation areas are the same, although the BP gives a stronger emphasis to the strengthening of democracy, the respect of human rights and the fight against illegal immigration (cf. Maestro, 2002:61).

Much like the ND, the BP involves a certain export of Western values and norms to the non-EU partner countries. The Mediterranean could as an effect be converted to an area of European economic and political influence. Some also argue that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is a "nascent and multidimensional regime that aims at establishing links between political (security), economic (MEFTA) and socio-cultural (human rights and civil society) arenas" (see Xenakis & Chrysochoou,

¹⁸ The Mediterranean Partners are: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia; Egypt, Israel, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Lebanon, Syria; Turkey, Cyprus and Malta. Libya has currently observer status at certain meetings.

2001:107).¹⁹ Thus, it seems possible to argue that the nascent regime of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership gave some input to the formulation of the ND.

However, there are important differences between the two processes. *First*, the BP has been going on for several years, whilst the ND is a new process and a post-Cold War phenomenon. *Second*, the ND lacks its own EU budget-line, whilst the BP has its own financial resources through the EU's MEDA programme and EIB loans. *Third*, the ND involves an important consultative approach where partner countries are treated as equals. The BP reflects a foreign policy approach based on a clear distinction between the 'insider' and 'outsider'. *Fourth*, there are specific challenges in the Baltic Sea region, which might be similar to those in the Mediterranean basin, but not identical (Interviewee 2, 09/01/2002). One important element of the ND is, for instance, its focus on confidence-building in relation to one of the former superpowers – Russia – bordering the EU, which is not the case in the BP. The cooperation in the Baltic Sea region also seems deeper and more developed than in the more heterogeneous Mediterranean region. *Fifth*, the BP involves 'hard' security elements such as the prevention of proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, which is not the case in the ND that explicitly has avoided this field. *Finally*, the BP has led to the signing of a number of (Euro-Mediterranean) association agreements, which is not the case in the ND process (Interviewee 1, 11/03/2002; Xenakis & Chrysochoou, 2001:85). This, as there were already agreements in place with the partner countries in the ND area prior to its launch, namely the EA, the PCA and the EEA agreements. There was no need to create new bilateral agreements.

¹⁹ The initial aim was to establish an EU-Mediterranean free-trade area – MEFTA – by 2010.

Hence, although existing similarities and the apparent linkage made to the BP, a comparison between the two regions should not be too extended.

1.3 From a Finnish Initiative to an Official EU Policy Approach

Finland had a successful marketing strategy to sell its ‘soft security’ initiative. In the spring of 1997, Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen wrote a letter to the President of the Commission Jacques Santer and suggested that the EU should develop a strategy for the ND. Santer agreed and promised a progress report on the topic for the following meeting of the Luxembourg European Council. Only three months after Lipponen’s speech in Rovaniemi, the Luxembourg European Council in December 1997 noted “the Finnish proposal concerning a Northern Dimension for the policies of the Union and requested the Commission to submit an interim report on this subject at a forthcoming European Council meeting in 1998”.

A relevant part of the political background was that the PCA between the EU and Russia, signed in 1994, entered into force in December 1997. This gave a new institutional framework for the relationship between the EU and Russia, including cross-border cooperation. On the basis of the Commission’s interim report on the ND, the Cardiff European Council of June 1998 requested the Commission for a second report, a Communication, to be submitted at the Vienna European Council in December 1998 (see also Heininen, 2001:29; Catellani, 2003:14).

The Commission Communication on a 'Northern Dimension for the policies of the Union' from November 1998 constitutes the Commission's response to this request. It states that "[t]he security, stability and sustainable development of Northern Europe are of major interest for the Union" (European Commission, 25/11/1998§12). It can be seen as a low-key approach as the further promotion and implementation of the ND should take place within the framework of existing contractual relations (EA, PCA, EEA agreements), financial instruments (PHARE, TACIS, Structural Funds/INTERREG) and regional organisations (the CBSS, the BEAC, the AC) (European Commission, 25/11/1998§25). It is stated that

within the framework of these existing contractual relationships, financial instruments and regional organisations, the Northern Dimension is a concept that can provide added value. It can contribute to the strengthening of the Union's external policies and reinforcement of the positive interdependence between Russia and the Baltic Sea region and the European Union, notably by achieving further synergies and coherence in these policies and actions. (European Commission, 25/11/1998§11).

In contrast to the original Finnish initiative, the 'High North' is less stressed in the Communication. The Communication recalls the Union's activities and instruments with regard to the ND, sets out the challenges facing the region, identifies the areas where the EU could provide added value, and establishes guidelines and proposes operational recommendations for future activity in this area (European Commission, 25/11/1998§1). It is further mentioned that the ND should promote economic development, regional co-operation, stability and security in the region, improve energy and transport infrastructure, address cross-border issues, contribute to narrowing the disparities of living standards and prevent and ward off threats originating in the region, such as reducing environmental and nuclear threats (European Commission, 25/11/1998§26). The non-members of the region were at

this stage not called partner countries, and one did not speak about a policy for a Northern Dimension, but rather a Northern Dimension for the policies of the EU (cf. Heininen, 2001:30).

The Vienna European Council adopted the Communication and invited the Council to identify guidelines for action within the framework of the ND. Consequently, in May 1999, the General Affairs Council adopted its Conclusions 'On the Implementation of a Northern Dimension for the Policies of the European Union'. This guiding document for implementation stresses that the ND is particularly important in sectors in which expected added value is greatest, such as infrastructure, including transport, energy and telecommunication; natural resources; environment and nuclear safety; human resources development; public health and social administration; cross-border co-operation; cross-border trade and investment; and fight against cross-border crime (Council of the European Union, 31.5.1999§3).

The implementation and further development of the ND should be done in close consultation with the now called 'partner countries' and within the previously mentioned regional bodies. Further, the interoperability and co-ordination of the PHARE, TACIS and INTERREG programmes should be improved. Finally, an enhanced participation of the private sector and of IFIs as well as co-operation with North America was deemed useful.²⁰ The Council guidelines for implementation were anchored at the Cologne European Council meeting in June 1999 as a "suitable

²⁰ In 1997, the USA launched a 'Northern Europe Initiative' (NEI) to promote stability in the Baltic Sea region. It emphasises regional, cross-border co-operation; aims at knitting together private sector groups, US governmental institutions, and NGOs interested in the region; and focuses on law enforcement, the environment, energy, public health, civil society, and business promotion (Prantl, 2000:7; Lassinantti, 2000:5).

basis for raising the European Union's profile in the region (Cologne European Council, June 1999§1.35.96).

Through these documents, the Finnish ND initiative was transformed into an official EU policy approach. Finland succeeded with its marketing strategy to anchor the ND on the Union's political agenda prior to its Presidency period.

There were several elements in this Finnish strategy. On the one hand, the vague definition of what exactly the initiative would mean and its broad geographical scope kept it open for various interpretations that could go well with the interest of everybody involved. This would facilitate the other member-states' acceptance of the initiative. The vagueness involved also opened up a possibility for different actors to shape the ND in accordance with national preferences whilst producing progress in terms of actions taken (cf. Catellani, 2003:20). This can be seen through the presidencies in focus of this study. The ambiguously expressed 'dimension' was also anchored in Finland's present non-alignment policy and its long-standing record of relations with Scandinavia, the former Soviet Union and present Russia.

On the other hand, the Finnish government emphasised the general value and benefit of the initiative for the entire Union and for its international role, whilst downplaying its links to Finnish national interests. The ND would provide added value to existing EU programmes (the EA and the PCA agreements), and the cost-effectiveness was underlined in that no new resources or institutions were needed. Finland decided not to emphasise the need for a specific EU budget-line for the ND, which is the case in the BP, as it wanted to avoid opposition especially from southern member-states

(Interviewee 9, 27/05/2002. See also Tallberg, 2003b:33; Marin, 2003:46). The most important thing was to establish the ND as an official EU policy approach; once this had been done, one argued, the budget question could eventually be raised. Russia was further seen as an equal partner, not an 'object' which shows the inclusive (as opposed to exclusive) nature of the initiative. This would also ease a positive Russian response to the initiative (Arter, 2000:678-679, 685-686; Maestro, 2002:65).

Finland also underlined that the ND not in any way would replace or compete with existing regional organisations in the area, which already dealt with many of the issues the ND brought up for intensified cooperation. This might also explain the fact that the ND became a policy approach rather than an organisation with its own budget and permanent secretariat (Interviewee 1, 11/03/2002).

2. THE FINNISH PRESIDENCY AND THE NORTHERN DIMENSION

2.1 General Performance of the Finnish Presidency

Finland's future tenure as EU Presidency in the second half of 1999 was taken seriously by its officials. Already in 1995 when Finland became an EU member, initial meetings about the Presidency were held. In 1997, decisions of informal and formal Council and European Council meetings were taken and in the spring of 1999, the Finnish Prime Minister's Office had hundreds of pages of priorities from

which to choose for its Presidency (Stubb, 2000:49-50; Tiilikainen, 2000:25, 2003:104; Stenlund, 2000:91).

As regards the *internal preconditions* for a successful Presidency, Finland seemed to be in a favourable situation. The position of the Finnish government was stable. The recent parliamentary elections had given a vote of confidence to the pro-European 'Rainbow Government'. Its position was firm as it was a majority government composed by a broad range of members reaching from the largest conservative party – the 'National Coalition Party' – to the 'Left Wing Alliance' on the far left (Tiilikainen, 2003:107).

However, the *external preconditions* can be seen as more challenging. The Finnish Presidency had a rather heavy agenda to manage, which included enlargement negotiations, preparations for the next intergovernmental conference, an extraordinary European Council meeting on Justice and Home Affairs (JHA), the stabilisation of Kosovo and work on fundamental rights and the defence dimension (Tiilikainen, 2003:104 ff.).

The Russian decision in September to launch a second military campaign towards Chechnya cast a shadow over the Presidency and made it difficult to focus on the EU-Russia relations to the extent it had intended. Moreover, there was a political vacuum in the Union's political machinery. The Jacques Santer Commission resigned in March 1999, which meant that the EU lacked an effective Commission until the new Romano Prodi Commission could enter office when the Finnish Presidency had already started its work. Another element of instability was caused by

the European Parliament elections just a few weeks before the start of the Presidency, and the Amsterdam Treaty had recently entered into force (Tiilikainen, 2000:27; Marin, 2003:47). All these elements provided a difficult background against which the Finns had to set out their Presidency priorities.

Finland's main aim was to run a successful Presidency that contributed to the European integration process, with a focus on the European, not the national agenda (Stubb, 2000:51-53). The main focal point of the Presidency was five rather common themes: enlargement, institutional questions, JHA, the Internal Market including the information society, and external relations.

One Presidency goal was to contribute to a successful *enlargement*. The accession negotiations with the first group of candidate countries were advanced and it was decided to open up negotiations also for the second group. At the Helsinki European Council, the Presidency confirmed Turkey's status as a candidate state (Valtasaari, 01/06/1999; Leonard, 2000).

The Presidency dealt with *institutional issues* such as the possible agenda for the next intergovernmental conference and the so-called Trunpf-Piris report on Council reform. It emphasised openness and transparency of EU decision-making, efficiency and the need of strengthening the anti-fraud action in the reform of the EU political machinery (Tiilikainen, 2000:29-30).

As regards the *internal EU policies*, the Presidency was assigned by the Vienna European Council to deal with the creation of an area of freedom, security and

justice; a task that fitted well with Finnish ambitions. Consequently, the Tampere European Council established political guidelines for the area of JHA. Another Finnish goal was to promote employment, growth and stability, and the Council approved hundreds of regulations and directives in the first pillar during the Presidency term. A society based on knowledge and information, as well as social and ecological responsibilities were other goals in the Presidency programme that also expressed northern values (Tiilikainen, 2000:28, 2003:109).

In the field of *external relations*, the Finnish Presidency wanted to contribute to the creation of a globally active Union. The EU's international position was promoted by the development of the common crisis management capacity and the military dimension. 'Northern-ness' was clearly the geographical dimension of the EU's external relations that Finland tried to promote, although other dimensions needed attention as well, such as the Western Balkans. This shows how common it is for a Presidency to promote regional interests (Tiilikainen, 2003:108).

One of the main ambitions in this field was to promote the EU-Russia relations. The implementation of the Common Strategy on Russia fell suitably into the Finnish agenda and Finland aimed at advancing the implementation of the PCA. The Finnish own initiative that gained most visibility during the Presidency was the ND (Valtasaari, 01/06/1999).

2.2 Presidency Priorities and Ambitions in the Field of the Northern Dimension

Finland's Northern Dimension initiative was highly emphasised during the Presidency term. As expressed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time Tarja Halonen (12/10/1999), "the Northern Dimension is one of the main themes of our Presidency".

As noticed, at the launch of the initiative, the Finnish strategy was to get the ND firmly established at the Union's foreign policy agenda prior to its term in office so that the ND concept would be ripe at the time when Finland would take over the EU Presidency. This strategy explains why the ND was planned already a few years before Finland took office. If the ND already were a part of the EU's agenda, promoting it during its Presidency would not be seen as being biased and solely in the interest of Finland, but significant for the Union as a whole. As the ND already was a common EU policy, it was easier to put it on a high position among the Presidency priorities (Interviewee 1, 11/03/2002; Interviewee 7, 12/03/2002).

The Finnish strategy in order to advance the ND covered the whole policy-making process from the very launch of the initiative, through its acceptance as an official EU policy-approach, to the Foreign Ministers' Conference arranged during the Finnish Presidency, which was planned to speed up the project. This shows the explicit linkage between the initial launch of the initiative and its forthcoming Presidency period (cf. Tiilikainen, 2003:110).

Finland also found it important to emphasise the ND as a *Union* policy that encompassed the interest of the entire Union. This was done in order to highlight the multilateral character of co-operation, and to stress that the ND should not be seen as Finnish-Russian bilateral relations, nor as a regional policy limited to the member-states of the region (Interviewee 14, 14/03/2002; Interviewee 8, 30/04/2002; Lipponen, 12/11/1999; Stenlund, 18/06/1999; Lipponen, 21/07/1999).

Prior to the Presidency, there were divergent ideas within the Finnish Prime Minister's Office regarding the attention that should be given to the ND in the Presidency programme. Some argued in favour of having a rather long text on the ND in order to show its significance. Others meant that it was more important to stress in a shorter text that the ND was in the interest of the Union as a whole, thus avoiding being accused of breaking the neutrality norm (Interviewee 7, 12/03/2002).

As mentioned above, Finland had the general Presidency ambition to first and foremost work in the interest of the Union. National priorities were secondary. It was also important to be considered unbiased by the other member-states. Although constituting a key area for Finland, the compromise agreed upon was to present the Finnish priorities for the ND in a paragraph in the programme; a rather limited text. It is also possible to argue that as the ND already was an EU initiative, it did not need a lengthy description and focus in the programme.

Hence, the main goals and priorities of the Finnish Presidency as regards the ND and the Union's relations with Russia are found in its Presidency programme, which are similar to the Finnish interests and intentions crystallised at the launch of the

initiative. Hence, there is a strong linkage between the interests of Finland *vis-à-vis* the ND from the beginning of the regime formation process, and the priorities during its Presidency. There is also a general connection to the orientation of the Finnish foreign policy at the time. Within the work programme of the Finnish government from April 1999, it is for instance affirmed that the main aim of the government is to strengthen the relations with neighbouring regions, Russia, the Nordic countries and the Baltic States (Finnish government, April 1999).

In the Presidency programme, it is stated that “[p]romoting the new Union policy of a Northern Dimension will be an important objective for the Finnish Presidency.” (Finnish Presidency, SN 2940/2/99 REV 2, 1999:37). The intention was to get the ND concept firmly incorporated into the external relations of an enlarging Union, especially with regard to Russia and the Baltic States. It was seen as particularly important to stress Finnish values towards this part of the region. The Presidency adds that the ND “supplements and supports the Union’s Common Strategy on Russia” (Finnish Presidency, SN 2940/2/99 REV 2, 1999:37).

It is further mentioned that Finland together with the Commission would organise a foreign ministers’ conference, offering an opportunity for political discussions on the content of the ND between the EU member-states and the seven partner countries. The task of preparing the conference was assigned to the Finnish Presidency by the Cologne European Council in order to integrate the partner countries in the ND process.

There are two more points in the Cologne European Council conclusions that outlined the tasks for the Finnish Presidency in this field. First, the European Council believed that after the Foreign Ministers' Conference in November, the possibility of drawing up an Action Plan should be considered, incorporating the results of the Conference. Second, it considered that as the guidelines for implementation of the ND had been agreed upon in the Union, it was time to bring about closer involvement of the partner countries in the process (Lipponen, 21/07/1999). Hence, in the Finnish programme, it is mentioned that the Presidency should actively support the Commission's work to make the ND concept more concrete, and to implement the Commission Communication, the Council recommendations and the General Affairs Council guidelines. Finally, it is stated that the Helsinki European Council "will study the possibility of drawing up an Action Plan", in accordance with the Conclusions of the Cologne European Council (Finnish Presidency, SN 2940/2/99 REV 2, 1999:37; Cologne European Council, 1999:I.35.92; Stenlund, 18/06/1999). This illuminates the fact that many of the issues on the Presidency agenda originate from previous EU decisions, in this case earlier Presidency conclusions.

The Presidency programme also deals more explicitly with the EU-Russia relations. Already when formulating the ND, the main Finnish focus was Northwest Russia, and in particular on creating stability along the external border towards Russia, as well as addressing the large gap in living standards. The ND was further seen as strengthening Finnish-Russian relations. The Finnish emphasis in the Northern Dimension regime is thereby on 'soft' security values (Interviewee 19, 08/03/2002; Interviewee 14, 14/03/2002; Interviewee 1, 11/03/2002).

In the Presidency programme, it is stated that “[t]he Union’s relations with Russia must be developed on a long-term basis in line with the common strategy adopted at the Cologne European Council. This will be backed by the Northern Dimension policy.” (Finnish Presidency, SN 2940/2/99 REV 2, 1999:33). The Presidency intended to take immediate action to implement the Common Strategy on Russia, and to present a work programme for this to the Council. This work programme aimed at strengthening the foundations of democracy and market economy in Russia and increasing EU-Russia co-operation in fields such as the CFSP. Moreover, the Presidency aimed at advancing the implementation of the PCA in order to strengthen economic, technical and political ties (Finnish Presidency, SN 2940/2/99 REV 2, 1999:34-36).

2.3 Presidency Achievements in the Northern Dimension Field

Four major goals of the Finnish Presidency can be crystallised in the context of the Northern Dimension, which are important to analyse in order to assess the overall Presidency achievements in this field. *First*, to strengthen the EU-Russia relations. *Second*, to organise and prepare the Foreign Ministers’ Conference. *Third*, to get the Helsinki European Council to write down in its conclusions that the Commission should develop a Northern Dimension Action Plan (Interviewee 12, 13/03/2002; Interviewee 1, 11/03/2002; Halonen, 12.10.1999). *Finally*, to increase the role of and activate the Commission in the ND process in order to guarantee its continuation. These Finnish goals will be addressed in the following section, together with other interests and achievements.

2.3.1 Strengthened Relations with Russia

The Finnish Presidency highlighted the co-operation with Russia, which has been expressed by Halonen (12/10/1999):

We have made Russia one of the priorities of the Finnish Presidency. The reason is that we see good and smoothly-functioning relations between an enlarging EU and Russia as essential for balanced development in Europe. That will not be possible without a closer dialogue between the EU and Russia.

Since Finland is the one EU country that shares an immediate border with Russia, it is more or less expected by the other member-states that it promotes the Union's external relations with Russia. This was at least the conviction among many Finnish officials at the time of the Finnish Presidency. As pronounced by the Secretary of State Jukka Valtasaari (01/06/1999) just a few weeks prior to the Finnish Presidency:

In the relations with Russia,

[t]he immediate tasks are dictated by the need to avoid a new Chernobyl, to control transborder pollution, to prevent garage sales of nuclear weapon designs, to rein in epidemics of HIV, tuberculosis and diphtheria and to clamp down on organised crime." "Yet, ... we should try to lift our sights from the immediate concerns of avoiding the worst to determining the common interests that might serve as a basis for the integration of Russia into Europe and into the Euro-Atlantic world. There are good candidates, such as nuclear energy issues and the rule of law.

Thus, in the long-term, Finland wished to establish some common values between the EU and Russia that would underpin the ND regime, such as nuclear energy and the rule of law. In a shorter-term perspective, also other issues were emphasised, such as transborder pollution, nuclear safety and health problems, as well as organised crime. This shows again the Finnish focus on 'soft' security challenges in

the relations to Russia and its formulation of the ND as having a 'soft' security character.

The more explicit Presidency priorities *vis-à-vis* Russia were related to the two main EU documents on Russia. Finland intended to take immediate action and submit a work programme to implement the Common Strategy on Russia, which was adopted at the Cologne European Council just before the Finnish Presidency. It also aimed to advance the implementation of the PCA (Halonen, 12/10/1999. See also Nyberg, 15/07/1999).

Concerning the PCA, a fourth EU-Russia Summit in accordance with the agreement took place in Helsinki on 22 October 1999. The Summit agenda treated the EU-Russia relations, the ND, the Common Strategy on Russia, Russia's strategy on the EU, and co-operation in JHA, as well as nuclear safety and environment. The EU and Russia considered the next steps in enhancing co-operation in combating organised crime and "reviewed the state of play in the Northern Dimension initiative" (Finnish Foreign Ministry, 22/10/1999). They agreed that the close economic and political partnership between the EU and Russia and its further development within the framework of the PCA is based on common values such as "the respect of the principles of democracy and human rights, the rule of law and the market economy", and "share the common objectives of enhancing political stability and economic prosperity in Europe" (Finnish Foreign Ministry, 22/10/1999. See also Ivanov, 11-12 November 1999). These common values and joint objectives again show the basis for the ND regime and illustrate how some common EU values can be exported to other countries.

In addition, the parties intended to enhance their political dialogue and they recalled the importance of Russia's accession to the WTO. They welcomed the progress achieved in the negotiations on the Multilateral Nuclear and Environment Programme in Russia (MNEPR), and encouraged all the parties to intensify their efforts to conclude the agreement as soon as possible.

The MNEPR is an initiative launched by the BEAC in 1999, which shows how regional bodies can contribute to the development and content of the ND. The MNEPR establishes a legal framework for assistance and co-operation activities allowing effective implementation of environmental projects dealing with nuclear safety and waste management, particularly in Northwest Russia. Its purpose is to facilitate cooperation regarding the safety of spent nuclear fuel, radioactive waste management and the decommissioning of nuclear submarines and icebreakers in Russia. An associated Protocol on Claims, Legal Proceedings and Indemnification, intends to settle issues of liability arising from activities undertaken in this context. The MNEPR and its protocol involve the European Community, EURATOM, Russia, Norway, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium.²¹ This agreement and especially its attached protocol can be seen as a part of the regime rules that the Finnish Presidency wanted to promote in the framework of the ND.

The EU-Russia Summit further noted the progress made in outlining a draft joint action plan on organised crime. A conference on organised crime would be held in

²¹ The USA has only agreed on the main agreement.

Helsinki in December 1999. The parties concluded that developing an EU-Russia strategic partnership “will contribute substantially to peace, stability and economic prosperity in Europe as a whole and will help it meet the challenges in the next millennium.” (Finnish Foreign Ministry, 22/10/1999). Although being a regional interest of the Finnish Presidency, one stressed that prosperous relations with Russia would have positive implications for Europe as a whole. In this case, national interests seem to converge with European ones.

Finland achieved to a large extent its main Presidency goals concerning the EU-Russia relations, especially as regards the drawing of the member-states’ attention to this part of the external relations’ agenda. However, the Presidency had somewhat higher ambitions in this field than it was able to put into practice (Interviewee 9, 27/05/2002). The implementation of the Common Strategy on Russia and the PCA was delayed due to the Russian military action in Chechnya and the new course the EU-Russia relations took. At the Helsinki European Council, it was decided to sanction Russia; the Common Strategy would be “reviewed” and some funds were transferred from TACIS to humanitarian assistance. These sanctions were not lifted until the spring of 2000, when the suspended TACIS projects were reactivated (Tiilikainen, 2003:114-115; Marin, 2003:47). This shows how an external event seriously can affect the Presidency ambitions for the EU’s external relations.

2.3.2 The Foreign Ministers’ Conference

Finland was of the opinion that the concrete content of the ND should be developed in close collaboration between the EU, its member-states and the partner countries in

order to include the partners' interests into the process. The Presidency therefore organised together with the Commission a Foreign Ministers' Conference in November 1999.

The Presidency emphasised a number of elements it considered important with the Conference: that it identified *common priorities* for concrete action, that it represented the first gathering of all the ND partner countries, and that it provided a *forum of equal footing* and a *common political platform for co-operation* between the EU, the member-states and the seven partner countries (see also Stenlund, 2000:91; Stenlund, 01/12/1999; Interviewee 19, 08/03/2002).

The partner countries greatly supported the run-up to the Conference and presented their own initiatives for the development of the ND. Russian representatives even described the Conference as being the first real opportunity for an equal co-operation between the Union and the partner countries within the ND framework, and emphasised the significance of its main principles and objectives, stressing the importance of creating a vast "democratic space of cooperation which would exclude any dividing lines between states" (Ivanov, 11-12 November 1999). Consequently, an important outcome of the Conference was that it prepared the ground for further cooperation between the EU and its partner countries in the framework of the ND regime.

The Russian military action in Chechnya constituted an uncertainty as regards the success of the ND during the Finnish Presidency. It threatened to undermine at least a part of the foundations of the ND regime and its common values, namely the

principle of good governance and soft security cooperation. This would even more be the case if Russian representatives had not participated at the Foreign Ministers' Conference. As the ND is built upon co-operation, common values and norms, as well as on the belief in joint gains, the abstention of one of the principal agents at perhaps the most important political forum that underpins the regime could eventually transform the ND into a 'paper-regime'; i.e., a regime that exists on paper but is inefficient in concrete terms, in which one or several of the participants do not adhere to the common rules, and which does not improve the co-operation among the participants.

However, in the end, Russia chose to participate. Yet, many EU ministers of foreign affairs decided to abstain. For some, the Russian action might have been the conclusive reason why they did not send their ministers but instead senior officials as representatives. However, most of the ministers from the seven partner countries were present (Interviewee 19, 08/03/2002; Interviewee 12, 13/03/2002; Catellani, 2003:16-17).

On the one hand, the abstention of the ministers can be seen as weakening the ND regime. The effectiveness of a regime needs the active participation of all the participants in the main political negotiations, which the Conference constitutes. Although all member-states participated at the Conference, the fact that many decided to replace their ministers with senior officials could in a way show that less political attention was given to the ND process than the Finnish officials had hoped for.

On the other hand, this action could also be seen as a way to show Russia that one was dissatisfied with its military activities in Chechnya. Through this abstention the member-states showed their criticism against Russia's violation of universal values and norms. This could actually also demonstrate that the regime is functioning: if a regime participant breaks common principles and norms, it seems important that the others criticise and pressure this state so that it might reconsider its actions. This can be seen as a case of 'social sanction'. As discussed in Chapter III, the ND does not include explicit legal sanctions for a non-compliant behaviour as a part of the rules that stand at the basis of the regime. However, this does not exclude potential social sanctions. Nevertheless, in the end, the abstention did not have any substantial impact on Russia's intervention in Chechnya. This fact may be seen as an example of the argument presented previously that the rules seem to be rather weak in the ND regime, whilst the principles are its focus.

The regional organisations of the CBSS, the BEAC and the NCM, as well as the EU's Economic and Social Committee (ESC) and regional committee were all invited to the Conference, thus given means to influence the ND process. Other invited actors were observers from the IFIs, i.e., the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB). Both the sub-national level and the private sector were present through invited guest speakers. Never before had northern European matters been that closely addressed by such a combination of actors. This shows in an explicit manner the multi-actor approach involved in the ND regime.

In the Conference Conclusions, the EU member-states and the seven partner countries agreed that the ND concept was useful in “enhancing European security, stability, democratic reforms and sustainable development in Northern Europe”. All the participants thus emphasised the commonly accepted regime principles and values (Conclusions of the Foreign Ministers’ Conference on the ND 12/11/1999).

The ND would further facilitate “deeper co-operation in prioritised areas”. Expanded co-operation between the enlarging Union and Russia was considered instrumental in addressing the socio-economic challenges in the region, and economic integration was seen as promoting stability (see also Ivanov, 11-12 November 1999). Kaliningrad with its geographical location, deserved particular attention. Prior to the Conference, President Putin even declared the region of Kaliningrad as a ‘pilot’ project in EU-Russia relations (Marin, 2003:47). In addition, the Conference encouraged the EU to consider, in co-operation with relevant regional organisations and other partners, how to improve the interoperability and co-ordination of relevant EU programmes and instruments as well as of national, regional and multilateral programmes with a view to produce synergies and effectiveness.

The Finnish Presidency underlined that the ND would not in any way compete with or replace the regional organisations in the area (Interviewee 1, 11/03/2002). The Conference emphasised that these organisations had a specific role to play as instruments identifying and implementing joint ND priorities, as well as enabling the co-financing of projects. This shows the existing shared values among the organisations involved. Hence, these organisations can be seen as important actors in the ND regime as they contribute to its formulation through presenting proposals at

the Foreign Ministers' Conference, but also to its implementation through their participation in concrete projects. However, as the Finnish Presidency itself underlined the leading role of the Commission in the ND process and as the role of the regional organisations at this point was not fully developed, it could not focus as much on their role as has been done later (Interviewee 10, 08/03/2002).

At the Conference, the 'Arctic Window' in the ND was seen as an additional reason for fostering close links between the EU and the Arctic co-operation (see further Chapter VI). Lipponen encouraged the Commission to apply for an observer status in the Arctic Council (Lipponen, 12/11/1999; Conclusions of the Foreign Ministers' Conference on the ND 12/11/1999).

As regards co-operation in various issue-areas, there were three overarching themes of the Conference: promotion of stability through economic integration, response to cross-border challenges in Europe, and promotion of regional co-operation (Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 09/11/1999). A 'Northern Dimension Business Forum' was held simultaneously with the Conference. The Conference identified common priorities, which would contribute to the strengthening of security, stability, democratic reforms and sustainable development in the region and which would be provided with concrete substance. Here again, the common principles in the Northern Dimension regime were stressed by the participants.

Security of supply and sufficient storage capacities for gas was considered important. The Northern European forests were deemed to have global environmental significance and should be managed and utilised in a sustainable way. Transit and

transport services should be developed. In order to facilitate long distances contacts, one needed to develop telecommunications. Environmental protection, including nuclear safety, was seen as important in the region and the Conference called for harmonisation of environmental regulations and full integration of environmental considerations into sectoral policies such as transport, energy, agriculture and forestry. Combating cross-border organised crime in the region and border management was seen as important issues. Health and social problems needed to be further addressed.

In sum, a second priority of the Finnish Presidency was to organise and prepare the Foreign Ministers' Conference. Also this was achieved even though the Conference did not get its planned political backing by the other member-states as many ministers decided to abstain. This illustrates how issues on the Presidency's external agenda can be affected by international events.

It is also possible to criticise the results of the Conference seen through the Conclusions of the Chair for involving few new elements, as they were based mainly upon the General Affairs Council guidelines for the Northern Dimension (cf. Stenlund, 01/12/1999; Ojanen, 2000:370-371). Yet, the Conference can still be seen as a success if one considers the Finnish intentions. The Presidency had the ambition to increase the involvement of the partner countries in the ND process, which was achieved with the Conference as it identified joint priorities and provided a common political platform for co-operation between the EU, the member-states and the partner countries. The commitment of Russia to the development of the ND seen through various Russian speeches during the Conference, can be considered

valuable. Moreover, a Finnish priority was to prepare for an Action Plan in order for the ND to be given a more concrete content and to move to its implementation phase, and this recognition also constituted one of the central outcomes of the Conference (cf. Halonen, 24/11/1999).

2.3.3 The Helsinki European Council and the Preparations for an Action Plan

After the Foreign Ministers' Conference whose conclusions were welcomed by the Helsinki European Council, Finland's objective turned to considering the drawing up of an Action Plan of the ND (Valtasaari, 06/10/1999). One of the Presidency goals was, as we have seen, to have an Action Plan mentioned in the Presidency Conclusions. This aim was achieved. The Foreign Ministers' Conference recognised the need to draw up such a plan, and it welcomed an invitation from the Helsinki European Council to the Commission in order to examine how best to achieve this (Conclusions of the Chair, 11-12 November 1999). Hence, the activities during the Finnish Presidency meant that the Helsinki European Council invited the Commission to prepare, in co-operation with the Council and in consultation with the partner countries, an Action Plan for the ND in the external and cross-border policies of the EU, with a view to presenting it for endorsement at the Feira European Council in June 2000 (Helsinki European Council, 1999§I.21.62). However, one did not specify the exact content of the prospective Action Plan.

This Action Plan would be designed to derive maximum added value from Community and member-state programmes through better co-ordination and

complementarity, which also can be seen as one of the important principles of the ND regime. The Action Plan was finally adopted at the Feira European Council, which means that there has been a rather good follow up to the Finnish Presidency (Interviewee 12, 13/03/2002). This illustrates that many initiatives and activities launched by the Presidency show their results first after its term in office. The Action Plan, which can be seen as the key guide to the ND, covers the years 2000-2003, and lists the horizontal challenges, existing instruments, funds and commitments (see further below).

2.3.4 Issue-Areas in Focus

Rather than to focus on a few issue-areas included in the ND framework, Finland has always stressed the horizontal dimension and the totality of the issue-areas involved. Finnish officials argue that if one were to focus solely on a few issue-areas, only a small number of the Commission's Directorate-Generals would be involved, with consequences for the cohesion and strength of the Commission in the ND process. The horizontal approach is by Finland seen as one of the most important values within the Northern Dimension regime and strengthens its composite character. Moreover, as Finland emphasises the character of the ND as an EU policy approach (not a regional policy only for the member-states of the region), the Commission has an important role to play.

This horizontal dimension was also highlighted during the Finnish Presidency term. It was seen as lifting out the whole scene of activities in the region into the limelight, which would produce clear added value. It would further create more favourable

conditions for progress in terms of concrete projects within appropriate sectors, as the ND aimed at promoting joint financing between the Community, EU members, partner countries, regional bodies and IFIs, and at facilitating private investments. With this horizontal approach, all the member-states would also find something they liked with the concept (Stenlund, 02/12/1999; Interviewee 19, 08/03/2002; Interviewee 10, 08/03/2002).

Despite this horizontal approach, a few issue-areas were somewhat more highlighted than others. One such area was *energy co-operation* coupled to sustainable environment, despite being less emphasised (and not among the top priorities) than during the latter Swedish Presidency. This can be explained by the fact that it was a rather new area of co-operation.

In particular, the vast Russian natural gas reserves from the Barents Sea and their importance for the post-enlargement EU were emphasised. The Presidency developed a 'Northern Dimension Gas Study' in order to address this issue. It was argued that as the need for gas would increase, the access to imported Russian natural gas would become imperative. If a new gas network and new pipelines were built from Russia, via the Baltic Sea to the European mainland, it would be possible to utilise Russian gas (see Fortum, 1999). Norway was also considered an important energy exporter, yet having smaller reserves than Russia. The gas issue was seen as vital in the general EU-Russia dialogue, but it should not be separated from the ND co-operation; it was considered an important part of it (Interviewee 19, 08/03/2002).

As part of the ND co-operation, Finland organised in October a Baltic Sea Energy Ministers' Conference in Helsinki, aiming at developing energy co-operation in the region. The Baltic Sea Region Energy Co-operation (BASREC) was established among the participants Poland, Russia, the five Nordic states and three Baltic States. The Commission was represented by DG Energy and Transport, and also delegations of the EU member-states outside the Baltic Sea region and of the USA, as well as representatives of international organisations and IFIs attended the Conference. A group of senior officials was established to steer BASREC's activities, in which the Commission would participate.

The Conference can be seen as a continuation of the energy co-operation between the Baltic Sea States initiated by the Prime Ministers of the Nordic countries and the Baltic Sea States. It concluded the Baltic Energy Task Force project of the Commission that was launched in 1998 in order to bring the energy priorities in the region into a Joint Energy Programme.²² The outcome of the Conference was welcomed by the Foreign Ministers' Conference, and it was seen as forming the basis for further energy co-operation in Northern Europe.

In addition to this, a Commission Communication on 'Strengthening the Northern Dimension of European energy policy' was presented a month later, which was adopted in December by the Energy Council. This Communication identifies intensified energy co-operation as an important ND value (European Commission, 08/11/1999:16). The Commission stated that "[s]trengthening the Northern Dimension of European Energy Policy will help to increase the contribution of these

regions to achieving the EU energy policy objectives of security of supply, competitiveness and environment.” (European Commission, 08/11/1999:17. See also Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 02/12/1999). The Commission agreed with the Finnish Presidency that the ND states play an important role in European energy trade and transit between energy-producing and energy-consuming countries.

Environmental protection was another emphasised issue-area during the Presidency. The Services of the Commission presented a position paper at the Foreign Ministers’ Conference on the ‘Environment in the Northern Dimension’, which aimed at promoting multilateral co-operation to address transboundary problems in the region. It outlined the most important environmental issues, objectives for EU contribution, and instruments of co-operation, as well as short and medium term actions for the first steps of implementation. It stated that the “Northern Dimension initiative needs to be seen fundamentally as a sustainable development initiative.” (European Commission, 08/11/1999:4). Consequently, sustainable development can be seen as an important value within the ND regime.

Sustainable development was also a stressed ND value by the Russian representatives at the Foreign Ministers’ Conference. They acknowledged the cross-border environmental threats in the north-western parts of Russia, at the same time as they underlined that also Russia is affected by pollution from neighbouring countries. In order to tackle these issues, “the necessary financial backing is needed”. Russian representatives were of the view, after having read the Commission document on the

²² This programme was agreed by the CBSS members in December 1998, and it presented its results at the Foreign Ministers’ Conference (European Commission, 08/11/1999:2-6).

matter, that the EU should become more actively involved in the needed financial mechanisms (Yantchik, 11-12 November 1999).

In October, a seminar on 'Sustainable Development of the Forest Sector in the Northern Europe' was organised in Petrozavodsk, Russia. It identified new demands and opportunities for northern forestry, forest industries and environmental conservation. The output of the seminar was reported to the Foreign Ministers' Conference and it was seen as a stepping stone for concretising the forest sector under the ND concept (Finnish Foreign Ministry, 10/11/1999).

In addition to these areas, ND issues were brought up for discussion in many of the various Council constellations during the Presidency. The Health Council, for instance, discussed public health matters in the EU-Russia co-operation, and the importance of the ND in this field. Public health and social administration was seen as one of the areas where there was clear added value with the ND concept through better co-ordination and increased synergies of co-operation. At the Council's Budget Committee meeting in July, the ND belonged to one of the issues discussed.

In addition, the ND was often a topic discussed at various international forums, and several conferences and seminars were held that addressed various issues of the ND. For instance, in July, a Conference of Chairmen of Foreign Affairs Committees from the Parliaments of both EU and Applicant States was organised in Helsinki, which brought up the ND and security in the Baltic Sea region (Finnish Foreign Ministry, 21/07/1999). At this conference, Lipponen (21/07/1999) argued that from a partner's point of view, the main added value with the ND lay in the stronger presence of the

Union in Northern Europe, and in concentrated, multilateral efforts to solve the region's problems and embracing its opportunities. Hence, cross-border co-operation and stronger EU presence in the region can here be seen as two key regime values that the Finnish government wanted to stress.

A seminar on rural areas was held in Joensuu in October, which outlined eight ideas in order to stop the depopulation of rural areas (Finnish Foreign Ministry, 02/10/1999). The same month, the Presidency, the Commission and Canada organised a seminar on 'Circumpolar Co-operation and the Northern Dimension' in Canada, where the EU and Canada identified common goals and agreed on exchanging information and enhancing synergies in advancing the northern dimensions of their policies.²³ Special attention would be given to the 'Arctic Window' of the ND and areas such as sustainable development, the Arctic indigenous peoples, environmental issues, northern children/youth, co-operation in research and higher education, information technology and telecommunications in the Arctic area (Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 21/12/1999).

Moreover, the EU and the USA held intensive consultations on deepening their co-operation in Northern Europe. They reaffirmed their shared commitment to promoting security, stability and economic prosperity in Northern Europe, particularly by strengthening cross-border co-operation (Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 20/12/1999). This shows again the emphasised common values and principles of the ND. In addition, the ND was one of the topics discussed at the EEA Summit in Istanbul in November. The Finnish Presidency also organised some co-

²³ Canada has its own 'Northern Dimension' in its foreign policy.

ordination meetings with the member-states that would hold the Presidency between Finland and Sweden – i.e., Portugal and France – in order to ensure greater continuity of the ND process (Interviewee 19, 08/03/2002).

3. ANALYSING THE FINNISH PRESIDENCY

The first part of this analysis addresses the room of manoeuvre of the Finnish Presidency concerning its potential to influence the development of the Northern Dimension on the EU's external relations' agenda.

As regards the regime components in the ND, all the participants have jointly agreed on a number of principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures which are stated in the main ND documents and which together form the basis of the regime. This broad agreement can be seen through all the partner countries' signing of the Conclusions of the Chair from the Foreign Ministers' Conference in 1999, as this document gives a good overview of the content, priorities and regime components of the ND (see Conclusions of the Chair, 11-12 November 1999). However, it is still possible for each Presidency to stress some of the regime components or certain aspects of them.

As discussed previously, the four regime components can be divided into two sections which facilitates the analysis. Principles and norms provide the basic defining characteristics of a regime; they define the nature of the issues involved and constitute its normative framework. Regime rules and decision-making procedures

are the instrumental part of regimes, prescribing actions to be taken. The Finnish position as regards these components is addressed in the second part of this analysis. The third part assesses the relevant phase of the regime development process.

3.1 Presidency Functions and the Northern Dimension

3.1.1 Administration, Management and Co-ordination

In order to manage the Presidency function of administration and management well, it is important that the Presidency is efficient. The Finnish Presidency was well prepared, the Presidency role was taken seriously, and Finland had a stable domestic situation as well as a functioning central administration in time for its Presidency. The Finnish political elite can be seen as comparatively 'integration-friendly' and Finland has also a rather extensive experience of diplomatic relations (see for example Tiilikainen, 2003:111).

Although belonging to the group of smaller EU member-states and lacking previous experience of chairing the Council, this did not seem to influence the general performance of the Presidency in a negative manner. According to most evaluators, Finland managed the Presidency role and the Council's huge agenda rather well, although some problems occurred as regards the German and Austrian boycott of the informal ministerial meetings due to the Finnish decision to exclude German from its official languages. The Finnish chairmanship can still be considered as one of the most efficient procedural presidencies in recent years (cf. Leonard, 2000).

The Presidency further had a good relationship with the Council Secretariat, and it undertook a well-functioning cooperation with the Commission and the European Parliament, despite the fact that both of them had recently been installed (Tiilikainen, 2003:112). The Finnish expectations concerning its first Presidency also seem to have been realistic. The closer the Presidency approached, the more the Finnish aspirations centred on just a proper management of the vast agenda.

As Finland prepared, organised and chaired all the meetings in the Council machinery and wrote the conclusions of the Foreign Ministers' Conference, as well as the Presidency conclusions, it had the opportunity to bring up and prioritise issues related to the ND in the EU's foreign relations. This opportunity was enhanced by the fact that it is easier for the Presidency to make its voice heard in the Council negotiations compared to other member-states. Indeed, Finland influenced the integration process by introducing northern values, and the EU's attention was drawn towards the territories and problems around its northern borders (cf. Tiilikainen, 2000:32).

Although emphasising the European agenda and the Union's interests, not the national ones, and despite having a rather limited text on the ND in the Presidency programme, one of the main themes of the Finnish Presidency was indeed the Northern Dimension. However, as the ND already was an established EU policy, Finland was not criticised by the other member-states for stressing it or for challenging the neutrality norm. Instead, it was somewhat expected that Finland would draw attention to the relations with Russia and the Northern parts of Europe.

This can be explained by the fact that the ND initially was a Finnish initiative, that Finland has long experience of close relations with Russia and is the only EU country that borders it. Finland further has a good experience of co-operation with other ND partners in the region. The Finnish promotion of the ND, which the other member-states knew was of national interest, was accepted as this promotion was not seen as exaggerated and as Finland continuously emphasised the overall European benefits of this. Consequently, the Presidency seemed capable of balancing its 'leadership' role with that of a 'mediator'.

During the Finnish Presidency, the ND seemed to constitute an area in which both national concerns and European interests concurred. By defining the ND as a *Union policy*, Finland stressed that it should not in any way be seen as a regional policy that involved solely the member-states of the region. Moreover, this would avoid others' consideration of the relations with Russia as being of a Finnish character. The Presidency also underlined that addressing soft security challenges in the Baltic Sea region would not only benefit the countries in the area, but all the member-states due to their interdependence and the scope of the problems in the region.

3.1.2 Policy Initiation and Agenda-Shaping

The Finnish Presidency used its role as agenda-shaper and included the ND at the agenda of various Council formations, at international conferences, and it was incorporated in the Presidency submitted bases for discussion. This meant that Finland successfully managed to draw the attention to the ND in a great number of discussions, both within the Council machinery and at international forums.

By presenting the ND as an important Presidency priority and through including it in a great number of discussions in its function as chairman, Finland managed to influence the EU foreign policy agenda and strengthened the Union's international presence in the Baltic Sea region, at least during its six months in office. This latter aspect was also a stated Finnish value in the ND regime. This clearly shows how the Presidency actually has some room of manoeuvre and is capable of influencing the EU's external relations, especially in cases where there is a willingness of the Presidency to act. This influence would perhaps have been stronger if the external preconditions had been more favourable for Finland, most notably, calmer in the Russian governmental relations with Chechnya.

There are several ways a Presidency can influence the Union's political agenda in its role as agenda-shaper. Especially its variant of *agenda-setting* is relevant for the Finnish Presidency. As noticed, Finland affected the EU's political agenda by prioritising the ND in the Union's external relations and presenting it as one of the main themes of its Presidency. This can be seen as an awareness-raising effort in order to draw the EU's attention to a previously unexplored area. The ND did not constitute a new matter that was added to the Union's agenda by the Presidency as it already constituted an EU initiative. However, Finland decided to shape and highlight various aspects of it during its Presidency term. Hence, the awareness-raising efforts began before the Presidency term, and the time in office was then used to anchor Finland's concerns firmly on the EU's foreign policy agenda (cf. Tallberg, 2003b:23-24).

Ensuring the continuity of the ND process after the end of the Presidency was seen as crucial. Finland further wanted to start with the concrete implementation of joint projects in fields such as environmental protection, energy supply, health issues, fight against organised crime, trade and investments. Areas in which joint action was seen as important and fruitful were identified in the Conclusions of the Foreign Ministers' Conference, which were recaptured by the Commission in its Action Plan (see further below). Finland believed that these two aspects – ensuring the continuity of the ND and starting with the concrete implementation – could be captured if an Action Plan were mentioned in the Presidency conclusions and prepared for the Feira European Council. As the Action Plan indeed figured in the Presidency conclusions, one of the tasks of the following Portuguese Presidency was to speed up the ND process so that such a plan actually could be adopted by the end of its term in office. Also the fact that the Action Plan covered the years 2000-2003 ensured that the ND process would continue.

The main aim of the Action Plan was the implementation of the ND, which thus explains the Finnish emphasis on having it mentioned in the Presidency conclusions. Also the stated participation of the partner countries in the drawing up of the Action Plan followed the Finnish intentions to make them more involved in the process. Both Finnish goals were consequently achieved; the continuity of the ND process and the implementation of common projects were ensured when Finland handed over the political leadership to Portugal.

In order to ensure the continuation of the ND on the EU's agenda, Finland also organised some co-ordination meetings with the member-states that would preside

the Union between Finland and Sweden, and strongly appreciated the intention of Sweden to organise a high level follow up to the Foreign Ministers' Conference during its future Presidency (Conclusions of the Foreign Ministers' Conference on the ND 12/11/1999; Lipponen, 12/11/1999)

Another way to keep the ND on the Union's foreign policy agenda was to engage the Commission more actively in the process. Its role was perhaps seen as especially important for the ND process when other than Nordic states held the Presidency function. An increasingly active Commission would also enhance the horizontal dimension of the ND. Finnish officials argued that if the focus during the Presidency were limited to a few issue-areas, this would harm the horizontal dimension and probably weaken the role of the Commission in the process. If the Commission became less involved, this would be detrimental for the ND as a whole, and ultimately, it could be undermined as a Union policy. The ND can be considered an area in which the position of the Commission and that of the Finnish Presidency concur, which can be seen through the speech by Commissioner Chris Patten during the Foreign Ministers' Conference (Patten, 11-12 November 1999). This fact might illustrate the universality of the ND regime, and gives further explanation to the Finnish emphasis on the role of the Commission.

There were also some *limitations* involved regarding the possibilities for the Presidency to influence the EU's external agenda. Many ND issues were determined prior to the Finnish Presidency period, which somewhat narrowed its room of manoeuvre. It was for instance already established by the Cologne European Council that the Finnish Presidency would organise a Foreign Ministers' Conference and to

consider the possibility of drawing up an Action Plan. However, this was also in Finland's interest.

Moreover, some external events influenced the results the Finnish Presidency had intended to achieve, most notably the Russian military actions in Chechnya. These led to the poor political backing of the Foreign Ministers' Conference by the other member-states and to the delay in the implementation of the Common Strategy on Russia and the PCA. Even a decision on concrete sanctions towards Russia was taken at the Helsinki European Council. The absence of several of the member-states' ministers at the Foreign Ministers Conference also shows how the Presidency results depend to a large extent on the co-operation of the other member-states. Moreover, the short term in office meant that a lot of initiatives taken during the Presidency were not achieved in concrete terms until after its term. The Action Plan that was advanced during the Presidency, for instance, was not approved until the Feira European Council the following year.

3.1.3 Mediation and Consensus-Building

The Finnish status as a small and military non-aligned member-state was seen as an advantage by external observers regarding the Presidency function of mediation. Finland did well as regards the Presidency's co-ordination, mediation and consensus-building function. Its own interests were moderate; general success for the European integration process was seen as more important than realising its own national interests (Tiilikainen, 2003:111, 115).

In the Presidency role as a consensus-builder or problem-solver, most discussions in both the Council and at intergovernmental and some international conferences start around papers presented by the Presidency, and as a rule negotiations are concluded by a compromise text produced by the Presidency. This can be seen at the Foreign Ministers' Conference. The Conference agenda, put together by the Finnish Presidency, was built around three themes – promoting stability through economic integration, addressing trans-border challenges of European significance, and outlining perspectives for regional co-operation. The invited speakers were free to address any of these themes. The speakers were consequently influenced by the Finnish presented focus for the Conference in their speeches and contributions to the Conference. Moreover, the Conference ended with a document produced by the Finnish Presidency – the Conclusions of the Chair – which constituted a compromise text based on the negotiations and individual contributions and position papers to the Conference. Although the existing link between this document and the Council guidelines of May 1999 for the implementation of the ND, and despite the absence of substantially new topics to already existing ones, the Finnish Presidency still had a possibility to influence the further direction of the ND by presenting formulations and wordings that fitted Finnish concerns.

The Finnish influence in this function is also visible in general Council negotiations. The ND was mentioned in various Council formations that touched upon topics that also were included in the ND concept such as the Health Council, the Energy Council and in the Council's Budget Committee. The Finnish Presidency further considered it important and was very active in including ND issues in various diplomatic dialogues. Several conferences and seminars were organised to discuss

issues related to the ND. At some international conferences and summits, the ND was one of the topics in the discussions and figured in the final texts of these meetings in the form of joint statements. This was the case with the EU-Russia Summit in October, the EU-Canada meeting and the meeting between the EU and the USA in December. These activities can also be seen as *agenda-structuring*.

3.1.4 Representation

Finland also took advantage of the Presidency's representation function, both internally and externally. When acting as the spokesperson for the EU in its dialogues with third countries, such as the USA and Canada, it emphasised and drew attention to Finnish concerns in the Baltic Sea region and to the challenges in the Northern parts of Europe. Finland managed to influence third countries in its priority fields, which probably would have been more difficult if it did not have the Presidency position. Also in the Union's international negotiations with groups of countries, such as the EFTA states, the ND was one of the topics on the agenda.

The Presidency can be seen as very successful in spreading the understanding among other member-states and other countries both in Europe and in North America for Finnish concerns and priorities in the Baltic Sea region. One of the main objectives was also achieved through this intensive marketing of the ND, namely, to get the ND concept firmly incorporated into the external relations' agenda of an enlarging Union.

Finland was also aware of the fact that the Commission constitutes another influential actor in the external relations' field, and found it essential both to have a well functioning relationship with it during the Presidency term and to emphasise its important role in the ND process. A fine bond with the Commission can be seen as especially important for smaller member-states. The Foreign Ministers' Conference was, for instance, organised in partnership with the Commission.

3.2 Emphasised Issue-Areas and Regime Components

3.2.1 Promoted Principles, Norms and Issue-Areas

In the integration process, it is rather common that each member-state tries to make the best out of the EU, emphasising some features over others so that the Union will resemble the country itself. It is essential to show for the citizens that membership is first and foremost beneficial. Besides holding the Northern European region as the geographical dimension of the EU's external relations that Finland wanted to promote, other topics on the Presidency agenda also illuminate Finnish values and norms.

Through emphasising the administrative principles of the Nordic countries in the reform of the EU political machinery, such as stressing openness and transparency of EU decision-making, the European integration process could be influenced along Finnish values. A society based on knowledge and information, as well as social and ecological responsibilities were other goals in the Presidency programme that

expressed Finnish or Nordic values. By emphasising these values during the Presidency, it would become evident that the Finnish government had the means to influence the orientation of the integration process – although representing one of the smaller member-states – which could also make the EU more attractive among Finnish citizens. Also some more general EU values were emphasised and included in the discussions during the Presidency term, such as the importance of good governance, economic integration and market economy.

The ND can in general terms be seen as a classical example of this described phenomenon: Finland seems to stress its own national interests, policies, values and norms, and thereby in a sense tries to make the Union look more Finnish. Finland has through its ND initiative in general attempted to export some Finnish values, norms and policies to especially Russia and the four candidate countries of the region, which together also constituted the geographical focus of the Presidency. Finnish officials have seen the remaining partner countries – Iceland and Norway – more as ‘quasi-EU members’ compared to the others. Indeed, less emphasis was put on the Western European partner countries and on the Arctic region during the Presidency term, despite the fact that Lipponen encouraged the Commission to apply for an observer status in the Arctic Council. However, Finland has also tried to influence other EU member-states so that they recognise and even adopt the values Finland considers important in the ND process. In a sense, the ND can be seen as a way of gaining understanding for Finnish concerns.

So what are the principles, values and norms in more concrete terms that Finland is stressing within the framework of the Northern Dimension regime and which it is

trying to export to other countries? The Finnish Presidency promoted the general principles and norms involved in the ND framework, which were crystallised at the formulation of the ND initiative and which it considers constituting the basis of the regime. These are that cross-border co-operation in a great number of issue-areas and a reduction in the socio-economic dividing lines that exist in the region (especially *vis-à-vis* Russia), as well as an integration of Russia into European structures, together are seen as contributing to the values of increased political stability, security and sustainable development. Soft-security challenges in the region, mainly connected to Russia, were seen as being addressed through intensified co-operation and coordination among the programmes and activities of the actors involved in the framework. This would also improve the financial and institutional efficiency. Here, again, we can see a linkage between Finnish interests at the launch of the ND initiative and its concerns during the Presidency term.

Three main *principles* were particularly stressed by the Finnish Presidency, namely cross-border co-operation, involvement of the partner countries in the development of the ND, and a multi-organisational approach based on the idea of internal EU co-ordination and synchronisation between different regional organisations, especially as regards the implementation.

Since the initiation of the ND initiative, Finland has stressed its *horizontal dimension* rather than drawing attention to a limited number of specific issue-areas, which also was the case during the Presidency. The horizontal element can be seen as one of the important defining characteristic of the ND composite regime and one of its important values. This means that the ND aims at co-ordinating the internal work

within the Union, both between various EU programmes, between different Directorate-Generals and across the three pillars. For instance, the ND instruments come from the first pillar (INTERREG, PHARE and TACIS), its objectives from the second (stability and security) and at least some of its problems from the former third (organised crime, illegal immigration etc) (cf. Ojanen, 2000:374; Arter, 2000:690 ff.). A great number of Directorate-Generals that deal with issues from all the three pillars are further involved, although there is a Northern Dimension co-ordinator in the DG External Relations.

The horizontal approach was emphasised by the Presidency as one of the most important values of the ND, which explains the Finnish stress on the totality of the issue-areas involved. This approach is also visible at the agenda of the Foreign Ministers' Conference, although presenting three broad themes for the discussions. For instance, instead of focusing solely on a limited region of Russia – Kaliningrad – Finland held the entire border area towards Russia important.

The highlighted horizontality might also be seen as a regime *norm*, as this principle, according to Finland, should guide the actions of regime members so that collective outcomes can be produced. One can also argue that such a horizontal approach is rather natural as the ND concept at this time still was rather new, which made it important to bring up to discussion all the various issue-areas involved in the concept, rather than to focus on a few. More recent presidencies could with this reasoning decide to focus on a few issues as the ND has gained experience.

However, although stressing the horizontality of the ND regime, some issues were still more visible than others during the Finnish Presidency. The Presidency highlighted energy co-operation and the protection of the environment as two issue-areas that needed attention.

The Finns gave a lot of attention to the norm involved in the ND regime that the non-EU partner countries should be seen as equals and should be consulted as regards the development and implementation of the ND regime. Also the fact that other regional organisations should be consulted in ND process can be seen as a promoted regime norm.

The *Union's relations with Russia* were stressed throughout the Presidency period and constituted one of its priorities. The strong emphasis on Russia can be explained both by Finnish experiences from the past, and the present situation in which many of the most serious soft security challenges that affect in particular Finland and the other countries of the region are stemming from Russia. Finland's geographical position thus matters, and Finland is interested in stability in the region. This explains the Finnish focus on the principle of co-operation across the Union's external borders in the region – particularly with Russia – in order to address various soft security challenges.

These challenges and the common values of security, stability and sustainable development have also been acknowledged by Russia, although having additional priorities. Russia gives strong emphasis to the element of 'equal' cooperation involved in the ND framework and the importance of having adequate financial

mechanisms – in which the EU could have a strengthened role – for the funding of common projects to address existing problems (Interviewee 18, 24/09/2003). In addition, it stresses the opportunities involved in the region such as improving trade and investments, and the vast reserves of raw materials, wood, oil and gas Russia can offer. Although the focus in the ND is on the environmental problems in Northwest Russia, Russia has indicated that it too is affected by cross-border pollution from other countries in the region (see speeches of Ivanov, Ahunov, and Yantchik, 11-12 November 1999).

3.2.2 Decision-Making Procedures and Rules in Focus

The Foreign Ministers' Conference was considered important for strengthening the co-operation between both EU and non-EU members of the region, involving the partner countries and providing them means to influence the ND process. This was emphasised both at the initiation of the ND as well as during the Presidency.

The Foreign Ministers' Conference can be seen as the main *decision-making procedure* within the ND regime. It gives all the participants equal means to influence the further development of the ND. The Conference conclusions, which is the final text and main document from this Conference is not only adopted by the EU members, but also by the partner countries. Although lacking legal basis, the document still constitutes an important guideline for further action for all the parties involved. As the Conference was emphasised by the Finnish government as the main decision-making procedure and was seen as being of fundamental significance for

the ND regime, the Presidency was disappointed when many of the EU ministers decided not to participate.

Also regional organisations became involved in the ND process through the Foreign Ministers' Conference, and their potential as regards the implementation of the ND was recognised by all the participants. In the context of regime analysis, all the ND partner countries agreed on the fact that these organisations constitute important actors for the implementation of the regime. Their role was perhaps not as emphasised as during the Swedish and Danish presidencies, which can be explained by the innovative character of such co-operation with regional organisations in an EU initiative and its rather recent recognition. By the time of the following Nordic presidencies, the concept had matured.

Finland emphasised the Common Strategy on Russia, the PCA and the ND as three important contexts in which to enhance EU-Russia co-operation, and through which common challenges could be addressed and stability in the region could be strengthened. The Presidency had the ambition to speed up the implementation of their provisions, which can be seen as another example of the regime procedures and rules Finland wanted to draw attention to. Also the Finnish promotion of the MNEPR agreement (especially its attached protocol), which establishes a legal framework for assistance and co-operation activities allowing effective implementation of environmental projects in Northwest Russia, can be seen as a part of the *regime rules* that the Presidency drew attention to.

However, the Russian disrespect of common principles and values such as democracy, the rule of law and non-violence resulted in the application of sanctions by the EU member-states. The absence of many ministers at the Foreign Ministers' Conference can in a sense be seen as the application of social sanctions, which constitute a part of the rules involved in the ND regime. As noticed in Chapter III, formal legal sanctions for a non-compliant behaviour do not exist explicitly in the ND. However, there is a sanction possibility involved in some of the programmes related to the composite regime. Benefits included in some of the agreements with third countries can be postponed or withdrawn. This sanction possibility was used by the EU at the Helsinki European Council in relation to TACIS funds and the Common Strategy on Russia.

3.3 Phase in the Regime Development Process

3.3.1 Regime Formulation – Establishment of the Northern Dimension

As discussed in Chapter III, regimes can be negotiated and formulated both by state and non-state actors on the basis of routines (previous experience of regimes), intentions and motives. The more efficient a regime is expected to be, the more positive earlier regime experiences have been, and the higher the 'issue-density', the more likely it is that a new regime is established.

Among the three approaches to regime formation – the power-based, the interest-based and the knowledge-based – the Northern Dimension regime seems to have

been formulated on the basis of national interests and on a search for joint benefits among the participants – in this case increased stability, security and sustainable development – as well as to solve collective problems in the region through interactive decision-making.

The process of regime formation is often mediated by existing regimes. As discussed above, related cooperation schemes (or regime processes) that guided and influenced the Finnish launch of the ND and its formation on the EU's political agenda were the previous BSRI, the CBSS activities and the BP.

But, what were Finland's interests, motives and intentions behind the launch of the ND initiative? How was the regime established on the Union's political agenda and how did Finland perceive the regime components and the issue-areas involved? Which relevant actors were defined as the basis of the ND regime, and which were identified as the regime's main addressees?

There were both internal EU developments and external events behind the Finnish decision to launch a Northern Dimension for the EU. From within the EU, in 1996 it was established that regional cooperation should be encouraged in Europe – from the very north to the southern regions. Moreover, Finland was aware it would chair the Council for the first time not long after its EU accession. Hence, instead of launching the ND during its Presidency term, which could be met with criticism from the other members as it was an initiative of strong national interest, it was presented in view of the time in office. In addition, the PCA between the EU and Russia, signed in 1994, entered into force in December 1997. These factors can explain the timing of the

initiative; it was launched after the Dublin European Council in 1996, but prior to its Presidency period, and in connection to the PCA agreement.

Important external factors that lay behind the initiative were the multitude of 'soft' security challenges that face not only Finland but also the other countries in the region. Many of these problems have their origin in the non-EU partner countries; particularly in Northwest Russia.

Through its initiative, Finland wanted to draw the EU's attention to the special opportunities and challenges that exist in Northern Europe. Among the problems illuminated by the Finns, there is the wide gap in living-standards between Russia and Finland, communicable diseases that cross national borders, environmental problems and the low level of nuclear safety, the risks of cross-border organised crime, trafficking in drugs and human beings, illegal immigration etc. However, Finland also stressed the significant opportunities the region could provide for the future development of the EU, such as the already established high level of regional cooperation, trade and business could be promoted, and the exchanges between universities, chambers of commerce, firms, cities, parliaments, local and regional authorities were seen as important features in the region. The ND would also contribute to Russia's integration into European and global economic structures.

In order to achieve the Finnish *aim* to address challenges in the area, enhance the EU's international role in the region and bringing economic benefits, cooperation was envisaged in a great number of issue-areas. Finland drew attention to the following fields of cooperation, which thus shows its focus on various *issue-areas*:

safety of energy supply and a more efficient use of natural resources, environmental protection and nuclear safety, combating organised crime, illegal immigration and drugs trafficking, facilitating economic interaction through improving infrastructure and removing obstacles to trade and investment, as well as improving living-standards in the partner countries.

Finland had many *motives and intentions* behind the formulation of the ND. Finland's long experience of the sometimes complicated relations to Russia and the lower level of politico-economic development in Russia whose effects could be felt in Finland, is one motive. Finland would also benefit from cooperation with Russia in the field of environmental protection and energy. Through the ND initiative, the Finnish-Russia relations would further be framed in a multilateral cooperation scheme and one single set of rules.

Another motive can be related to Finland's recent EU accession. It wanted to contribute to the development of the Union's foreign policy with its own experiences. This can also be connected to the fact that the CBSS was launched on a Danish-German initiative, the BEAC on a Norwegian idea and to Sweden's well-established Baltic Sea policy and role in relation to the BSRI. Like its Northern neighbours, Finland also wanted to contribute in concrete terms to the cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. In addition, Finland wanted to raise the Union's profile in the region and ensure that it would not lose the EU's attention in the context of the eastward enlargement and the development of the BP.

An additional motive is connected to Finland's domestic interests and foreign policy ambitions. The initiative suits Finland's foreign policy objectives perfectly, which now could be promoted within an EU context. A part of the Union's external relations' agenda could thereby in a sense be adapted to Finnish concerns.

The main *goal and value* of the ND regime was established by Lipponen as contributing to peace, security, stability and prosperity, through the establishment of a comprehensive strategy, an institutional framework and adequate financing. As noticed, these elements are similar to the key aim of the BP. There were further three important *principles* that Finland wished to export to the Union's foreign policy agenda, namely cross-border co-operation, equal participation of the partner countries in the development of the initiative, and a multi-organisational approach based on coordination within the EU and among different regional organisations, especially as regards the implementation. Hence, Finland emphasised the role of the partner countries and the regional organisations in the *decision-making procedures* for the implementation of the ND regime.

The *geographical area* was defined by Finland as north-eastern Europe, namely the five Nordic countries, the three Baltic States, Poland, and parts of Russia and Germany. The external relations not internal policies of the EU were emphasised. Although this broad area, the geographical focal point was specified as Northwest Russia. Important *actors* in the development of the initiative were these mentioned countries, together with the existing regional organisations in the area – the CBSS, the BEAC and the AC. The main addressees of the initiative were the non-EU

partner countries, in particular Russia, which is the only country in the region that has no EU membership perspective in the foreseeable future.

Through Finland's intensive marketing strategy the ND was transformed from a Finnish initiative into an officially adopted Union policy approach. The Finnish efforts in order to promote the emergence of the ND on the EU's political agenda can be seen as *agenda formation*. The *institutional choice* involves the formal establishment of the ND regime as an EU policy approach. Once this had been done, Finland presented the approach to the partner countries. Hence, the partner countries had a limited role in the concrete formulation of the regime when it first became an EU policy approach, which is rather logical as it is an EU-led regime. However, in the further development of the initiative, their views were welcomed.

The established EU policy approach is more or less identical with the Finnish initial proposal as regards the included issue-areas, regime components, regime actors and geographical focus, although giving less emphasis to the 'High North', which, however, was brought in again at the Foreign Ministers' Conference (see also Heininen, 2001:44). Thus, Finland contributed in a very concrete manner to the formulation of the ND regime and to the definition of the regime components and issue-areas involved, even though it had borrowed some important elements from the earlier BSRI (influenced by Swedish concerns), the CBSS and the BP.

As we have seen, the Finnish strategy when launching the ND was to transform it into an EU initiative prior to its Presidency term. It was therefore planned and prepared at an early stage, and introduced not long after Finland's EU accession, in

view of its forthcoming Presidency period. The ND process should be ripe as well as being a well-known concept for the other member-states in time for the term in office. In this way, Finland could use its Presidency term to forward the concept further, focus on its concrete structure and firmly anchor it as a permanent part of the Union's external relations' agenda. Consequently, regime formulation – or the establishment of the regime as a permanent part on the EU's foreign policy agenda – was the focus in the regime development process during the Finnish Presidency.

The Finnish strategy also explains its horizontal approach to the ND. As its main interest was to establish the ND firmly on the EU's agenda and secure its continuation, the best strategy was to focus on its entirety and not lifting out selected parts of the ND.

Also the convened Foreign Ministers' Conference was seen as a vital event in order to get the needed approval and support from all the ND partner countries for the composite regime. As the Conference represented the very first gathering of all the ND partner countries, the non-EU participants and their particular concerns would thereby become more integrated in the development of the ND. As the Conference was seen as an important event in the process of securing the initiative's position on the Union's agenda, its poor political backing by the member-states was regretted by the Finns. Yet, the Conference prepared the ground for further cooperation between the EU and its partners in the framework of the ND regime, which was an important achievement in line with the Finnish strategy. All the participants also agreed on the principles of the regime, which was a central outcome (cf. Marin, 2003:45).

In the stage of regime formulation it is important to consider how it should be implemented. If one does not have any substantial ideas on how the regime should be implemented in concrete terms, the regime would lose its *raison d'être*. The Finnish interest in preparing the ground for the ways in which the Northern Dimension regime would be implemented through an Action Plan also gives credit to the Finnish focus on regime formulation.

3.3.2 Regime Implementation – Preparations for an Action Plan

One of the most important outcomes of the Foreign Ministers' Conference was that all its participants recognised unanimously the need to draw up an Action Plan in order for the ND to be given a more concrete content and to move to its implementation phase. Besides securing its establishment on the Union's political agenda, the Finnish government was also concerned with preparing the ground for the implementation of the regime through securing that the development of an Action Plan by the Commission would be mentioned in the Presidency conclusions. As Finland succeeded with this task, it also contributed to the initiation of the first steps of the implementation phase in the regime-building process.

It was intended that the Action Plan should be adopted at the Feira European Council in June 2000. This was also the case. The Action Plan can be seen as the last step of the preparatory process within the EU – regime formulation process – and the official opening of the ND implementation phase.

The Action Plan consists of a horizontal and an operational part. The *horizontal part* recalls the major challenges in the ND region, such as bridging socio-economic gaps, environmental protection and health issues, barriers to cross-border trade and investment, fight against organised crime, research co-operation, energy supply and infrastructure, and the region of Kaliningrad. It also includes the guiding principles of the initiative, priorities for joint action and the legal and financial framework for ND activities.

The Action Plan should be implemented through existing *Community instruments*, in particular the EA, the PCA and the EEA agreements, and the Common Strategy on Russia; the *Community budgetary instruments* TACIS, PHARE/SAPARD/ISPA and INTERREG; as well as relevant *Community programmes* such as TEMPUS.

For the general implementation of the ND, the participation of member-states and the Commission in consultation with regional organisations was seen as important. The IFIs could play a significant role with regard to the facilitation of investments (Northern Dimension Action Plan, 2000:3 ff.)

The *operational part* is a reference document for the objectives and perspectives for joint actions during 2000-2003. Cross-border co-operation, partnership and twinning arrangements as well as public-private partnerships in project-finance should be explored. A key target for action is sectors in which expected added value is greatest: environmental protection and natural resources, energy cooperation, JHA, transport and border-crossing facilities, business cooperation and investment, public health, telecom and IT facilities, human resources development, preservation of traditional

ways of living of indigenous population, and problems in Kaliningrad (Northern Dimension Action Plan, 2000:8).

The Feira European Council invited the Commission to take a leading role in implementing the Action Plan and to presenting appropriate follow-up proposals, most notably in three priority fields: “the environment and nuclear safety, the fight against international crime and Kaliningrad.” (Feira European Council, 2000§1.55. 76). These selected issue-areas resulted largely from Swedish pressure on the Council and the Portuguese Presidency. They constituted areas which Sweden wanted to focus on during its pending Presidency term in 2001 (cf. Catellani, 2003:20).

The Action Plan incorporated the results from the Foreign Ministers’ Conference; its identified priorities and highlighted themes. Although being prepared by the Commission in co-operation with the Council and in consultation with the partner countries, one can still assume that Finland had a particular possibility to influence the content of the Action Plan along with its national preferences as it wrote the Conclusions of the Chair of the Conference (cf. Vanamo & Stenlund, 2000).

The Action Plan included a broad range of issue-areas in which action should be taken, which underlined the horizontal dimension involved in the ND. This concurred with Finland’s interests. The three emphasised priority themes also corresponded with Finnish priorities for the ND region. This was also the case with the role one intended to give to the regional organisations in the area as regards the implementation. However, whilst Finland drew attention to the entire border-region

towards Russia, the region of Kaliningrad was singled out as the geographical focus in the Action Plan.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The launch of the ND initiative was closely linked to Finland's forthcoming Presidency period. The importance of co-operation in the Baltic Sea region in order to address soft-security challenges that not only affect the countries of the region, but Europe as a whole, was continuously stressed during the Presidency. Finland also emphasised that the ND constituted an area in which national interests concurred with European ones.

The Finnish promotion of the ND was never criticised by the other member-states, despite the fact that all were aware that this also advanced Finnish interests. This promotion was largely accepted as it was more or less expected that Finland would take on a leadership role in the EU's relations towards the Baltic Sea region. The Finnish Presidency was never seen as abusing its role in order to stress solely national interests. Instead it succeeded in convincing the others about its honest intentions, namely to work in the interest of the EU.

Finland managed to influence the EU's foreign policy agenda through the different Presidency functions. It drew attention to Finnish concerns in the ND region, and especially to soft security challenges in the relations to Russia, both in various Council formations as well as at international forums. Finland succeeded in keeping

the ND as one important initiative on the Union's external relations' agenda also after its term in office, through emphasising the role of the Commission, including the future development of the ND in a number of documents, and contributing to giving future presidencies the task of developing various aspects of it.

When representing the Union internationally, Finland used its role to draw attention to the issue-areas involved in the ND regime. Finland had in its role as chairman the opportunity to use wordings that fitted Finnish concerns when it produced discussion papers and compromise texts. However, as is the case for every Presidency, the short period in office meant that more issues were launched than was possible to achieve. Moreover, some external events had an impact on the Finnish list of results.

For Finland, the horizontal dimension involved in the ND was more important to stress during the Presidency than a limited number of *issue-areas*. This was considered one of the most significant values of the ND. This horizontality and the Northern Dimension's composite character was especially seen as important in order to strengthen the role of the Commission, which was considered imperative for the continuity of the ND process. Due to the rather young character of the initiative, it was seen as more important to stress the entire framework instead of focusing on a few issue-areas. Yet, it seems as if a few issue-areas still gained a more pronounced position than others, namely energy co-operation and sustainable development.

As regards the general *principles* and *norms* involved in the ND framework, Finland stressed the importance of cross-border co-operation in various fields and the reduction in the socio-economic dividing lines in the region, which together were

seen as strengthening the values of increased political stability, security and sustainable development. The emphasised equal participation of non-EU partner countries and the horizontal dimension can be seen as promoted regime norms.

The co-ordination of programmes and activities of the actors involved in the ND regime was stressed for increased financial and institutional efficiency, and the role of other regional organisations was presented as central for the further development of the ND process and its implementation.

The Presidency also emphasised some general EU values and norms in the discussions with Russia, such as the importance of good governance, economic integration and market economy. Focus was put on ‘soft’ security challenges, mainly in the relations to Russia.

The main *decision-making procedure* in the ND regime, namely the Foreign Ministers’ Conference, was accentuated by the Finnish government. Its poor political backing can be seen as weakening the regime. This also illustrates how social sanctions can be introduced in the ND regime, in this case *vis-à-vis* Russia’s disrespect of common values through its military activities in Chechnya. In addition to these, some more formal sanctions were introduced by the Helsinki European Council, which shows the implicit sanctioning mechanisms and *rules* involved in the regime.

Finland focused on the *regime formulation phase* of the ND, as its launch was closely linked to its forthcoming Presidency term. In the formulation of the ND,

Finland was influenced by other existing cooperation schemes in Europe. It defined the actual challenges in the region that needed joint attention, related cooperation areas, identified the relevant regime components and issue-areas involved, and defined the main actors involved for the development of the ND, as well as its main addressees. Finland's Presidency period was used to firmly establish the ND as a permanent structure of the EU's foreign policy agenda and to get the political support for the initiative by the partner countries. This phase also gives some explanation to the Finnish focus on the composite character of the ND. Finland also contributed to the initial steps of the *implementation phase* of the ND regime by highlighting the importance of an Action Plan for its concrete implementation.

At the Foreign Ministers' Conference, Sweden stated its intention to organise a high-level follow-up during its pending Presidency period in 2001. As the Swedish Presidency was to take off not many months after the planned adoption of the Northern Dimension Action Plan, its leadership potential was seen by Finland as crucial for the further development of the ND, not least as regards its concrete implementation. Sweden was also strongly influenced by the outcome at the Feira European Council when preparing its presidential approach towards the ND.

Finland had rather high expectations on the Swedish Presidency in the ND area, especially as Sweden is one of few EU-members geographically located in the ND region. Also the future Danish Presidency met high Finnish expectations, which can be explained by the fact that Finland believes that Nordic presidencies are important, if not vital, for the further development of the ND regime. In between Nordic Presidency periods, the Commission was given a crucial role.

CHAPTER V

THE SWEDISH PRESIDENCY

1. THE SWEDISH PRESIDENCY AND THE NORTHERN DIMENSION

1.1 General Performance of the Swedish Presidency

The preparations for the Swedish Presidency started officially in 1997 and the final Presidency organisation was ready in 2000. The agenda for the Council meetings was well prepared, and eighty meetings were organised in different parts of Sweden so that the entire country would be engaged (Ruin, 2002:153, 158; Tallberg, ed. 2001:56-60; Bjurulf, 2001:6).

As regards the *internal preconditions* for the Presidency, Sweden had a well functioning central government, a stable domestic political situation and an efficient bureaucracy at the time for its Presidency. As Sweden was the last of the three new member-states to chair the EU, it could learn from their experiences. The Swedish extensive experience of international contacts and negotiations can be seen as favourable for conducting an efficient Presidency. In addition, the two largest parties in the Swedish Parliament – the Social Democrats and the Conservatives – usually find common ground in the foreign policy area (see also Bjurulf, 2003:138, 149).

The fact that Sweden does not participate in the single currency area and the sceptic public opinion towards the European integration process also within the Social Democratic party in power, could perhaps be seen as a less beneficial element when chairing the Union. The Social Democratic party has a preference for an *intergovernmental* European Union, and was co-operating closely with the most EU sceptic parties in the Parliament – the Left and the Green Party – in time for the Presidency period (Bjurulf, 2003:140). However, although being a rather ‘federal-sceptic’ country (see Miles, 2002b), this does not mean that it cannot work in the interest of the EU. The government indeed underlined its ambition of serving the interests of the entire Union.

As regards the *external preconditions*, Sweden was spared from unforeseen external events that could have affected its agenda. The tensions in the Middle East and in Macedonia were more or less expected, and the unexpected Irish ‘no’ vote to the Treaty of Nice had a positive rather than a negative impact for the Presidency. This, as it became even more important at the Göteborg European Council in June 2001 to send a positive signal to the candidate countries, which represented one of the Presidency objectives (Bjurulf, 2003:142).

The foot and mouth disease in the United Kingdom threatened the agenda of the Stockholm European Council informal meeting in March. However, this was handled through an introductory discussion on the topic, keeping the issue officially off the agenda. An external event that might have had an impact on the Presidency and its organised Stockholm Summit was the general recession in the world economy,

which affected the enthusiasm to go forward with ambitious employment strategies (Tallberg, ed. 2001:42, 231-234; Ruin, 2002: 36-42, 73, 106-112; Elgström, 2002b:46; Bjurulf, 2001:17).

The primary goal of the Swedish government was to have a competent, efficient and 'result oriented' Presidency, and it underlined its role as a neutral mediator. In general, it had modest political objectives and its ambition was to serve the interests of the entire Union, the member-states and their citizens, to ensure openness and to carry the issues on the EU's agenda forward (Swedish Presidency, 2001:1; Ministry For Foreign Affairs, 07/02/2001; Miles, 2002b:131, 142; Elgström, 2002b:46). The government consciously downplayed the possibility of using the Presidency to press forward national interests, through which it wanted to avoid exaggerated expectations on the Presidency domestically and to being seen as a reluctant European by other members (cf. Elgström, 2002a:185). This Swedish goal was similar to the Finnish one, and can be explained by the fact that countries presiding the EU for the first time in general are very concerned to make a good first impression.

The Swedish priorities for the development of the EU have to a large extent been areas in which Sweden considers itself as a frontrunner. Sweden is working for a similar development in the entire Union, which shows that it is trying to export its own policies, values and norms abroad. Among these, we find openness and transparency, environmental protection, gender equality, social and employment policy, as well as strengthened relations to Russia (cf. Bjurulf, 2003:140).

When formulating the Presidency programme, Prime Minister Göran Persson yearned for its acceptance by as many as possible; both within his own party, as well as by other political parties and the Swedish citizens. As Sweden belongs to the group of smaller member-states, it was seen as important that the Presidency was based on national co-operation and consensus in order to be efficient and to strengthen its position in the Council negotiations. This would reduce the risk for traditional domestic political conflicts during the Presidency term and also had the intention to make the EU membership more popular among the citizens.

The first presented Presidency priorities constituted traditional Swedish interests, which have characterised Swedish EU policy since its accession: employment, environment, equality, transparency, the enlargement process and Russia. However, after some criticism related to the number of priorities, the Presidency focus became three themes: enlargement, employment and environment – the three ‘E’s. Although being located at the core of Swedish politics, these themes were, in an EU perspective, seen as rather modest as they already were established policy areas on the Union’s agenda and coincided with European concerns. One did not have to fear a tough resistance from the other member-states, and it was considered possible to reach political breakthroughs in these areas during the six months in office. In addition, the government believed that if it succeeded in advancing issues Swedish citizens considered important, this could also assist in decreasing the number of domestic ‘EU sceptics’. The themes were welcomed by the opposition (Ruin, 2002:42-45; Persson, 03/07/2001; Tallberg, ed. 2001:29, 39-40; Miles, 2002b:132; Bjurulf, 2003:141, 144).

The eastward *enlargement process* was the most important foreign policy objective, framed as a project for democracy and peace. The aim was to “pave the way for a political breakthrough in the negotiations” through a potential establishment of a target date for accession (Swedish Presidency, 2001:1). This was achieved at the Göteborg European Council and the accession negotiations proceeded well (Statsrådsberedningen, 01/07/2001:1-2; Persson, 03/07/2001. See also Elgström, 2002b:46; Bjurulf, 2003:142).

As *employment* policy is an issue of large symbolic value for the Social Democratic party, it was logical that it received a lot of attention. The Swedes aimed at ensuring that the Stockholm European Council would contribute to further progress in the work to make the EU the world’s most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy. The importance of telecommunication and IT was stressed for economic growth and employment, and full employment was a Swedish goal (Regeringskansliet, 2000:10; Swedish Presidency, 2001:1; Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 07/02/2001). Some agreements were achieved, however, the actual results at the Stockholm European Council can be seen as quite meagre. This is due to the fact that the EU after a large number of initiatives in this area now had to make already decided actions workable (Tallberg, 28/06/2001; Tallberg, ed. 2001:104, 229).

Environmental co-operation is a general Swedish priority for the work in the EU. As Sweden is seen as a frontrunner in the environmental field, it was important to emphasise this issue during the Presidency. It believed it had the accurate solutions in this issue-area, and that other member-states should adopt the Swedish policies. The government found it essential that a strategy for a long-term adjustment of the

EU's policy to ensure ecologically, economically and socially sustainable development should be adopted at the Göteborg European Council, which also was the case even if it was criticised for being rather weak. Sweden aimed at integrating environmental considerations in all EU policy areas (Swedish Presidency, 2001:1; Regeringskansliet, 2000:10; Ministry For Foreign Affairs, 07/02/2001; Elgström, 2002a:186; Bjurulf, 2003:144-145; Bjurulf, 2001:18).

Although not belonging to the most prioritised areas in the Presidency programme, the Swedish government also wanted to develop the EU's *external relations*. In general terms, Sweden has since its accession tried to develop the parts of the Union's external relations that coincide with traditional Swedish interests, such as conflict prevention and management, supporting the ND, the relations with Russia, as well as the enlargement process most notably towards the Baltic States, which are in line with Swedish security policy. Five areas were in focus during the Presidency: (1) the relations to the Baltic States and Russia; (2) the relations to the USA; (3) the conflict in the Middle East; (4) the EU's policy towards Western Balkan, in particular Macedonia; and (5) the tensions at the Korean peninsula (Ruin, 2002:27-30, 73, 132; Persson, 03/07/2001. See also Miles, 2002b:132). Russia and the ND were highlighted as significant areas of interest with a 'soft' security dimension.

Other emphasised areas in the Presidency programme were the strengthening of the Internal Market, intensifying the efforts to create a region marked by freedom, security and justice, and promoting a Union of solidarity and gender equality. Sweden wanted to contribute to a more open, transparent²⁴ and modern Union with

²⁴ Some argue that the greatest Swedish presidential achievements were in this area (cf. Bjurulf, 2003).

cost efficiency and budget control. These areas also represent some general Swedish values it is trying to export to other member-states (Regeringskansliet, 2000:12-16; Statsrådsberedningen, 01/07/2001:15-18, 29; Swedish Presidency, 2001:2; Persson, 03/07/2001; Bjurulf, 2003:145).

1.2 Presidency Priorities and Ambitions in the Field of the Northern Dimension

In the post Cold War era and since the EU accession in 1995, the Swedish government has had a strong interest in strengthening the co-operation in the Baltic Sea region, enhancing the relations with Russia and speeding up the EU enlargement process especially towards the Baltic States and Poland. However, when Finland launched the Northern Dimension initiative in 1997, Sweden was initially not very enthusiastic. To some extent, it was seen as a competing Finnish initiative to Sweden's firmly established Baltic Sea policy, traditionally held outside the realm of the EU and more within the CBSS, and it was launched very soon after the Swedish promoted BSRI.²⁵ However, after some initial hesitation, the Swedish government warmly welcomed the initiative, which was seen as a flexible tool for advancing its own interests, not least during its forthcoming Presidency period (Ruin, 2002: 27-30, 133-135; Lindh, 25/02/2002; Interviewee 9, 27/05/2002; Interviewee 23, 19/09/2002; Catellani, 2003:15, 21). It is therefore rather logical that the EU-Russia relations and the ND represented important Swedish priority areas for its Presidency period – areas

²⁵ Denmark and Sweden would further have preferred being consulted and having the ND prepared in the NCM prior to its launch.

which also figure in the government's general foreign policy (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 07/02/2001).

From the beginning, there was no clear political strategy within the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning how the ND would be treated. However, during the fall of 2000, more concrete priorities in this field were crystallised. The ND was seen as a means to conduct Swedish Baltic Sea policy within the framework of the EU, to develop the Baltic Sea region cooperation and to further integrate Russian involvement within this (Interviewees 6 and 21, 29/04/2002).

The more specific Presidency priorities as regards the ND and the EU-Russia relations are found in the Presidency programme. The EU-Russia relations are seen as being largely "based on the work within the Northern Dimension" (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 07/02/2001). The cooperation between the EU and Russia is perceived as fundamental for European security and development, and this cooperation has "therefore been given high priority." (Swedish Presidency, 2001:17).

The Presidency intends to "energetically continue" the implementation of the EU Common Strategy on Russia, and it perceives that a long-term perspective and an intensified political dialogue are necessary. In the EU-Russia cooperation, focus should be drawn to the support for civil society and free opinion forming, the environment and nuclear safety, the fight against organised crime, and cooperation in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as the integration of Russia into the world economy. Consequently, these represent both some common EU values and Swedish priorities that the government decided to stress during its

Presidency (Swedish Presidency, 2001:17; Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 07/02/2001; Interviewees 6 and 21, 29/04/2002).

In a joint article from 2000, Commissioner Chris Patten and Swedish Foreign Minister at the time Anna Lindh considered the ND an initiative in which both Community interests and national policy objectives coincided (Patten & Lindh, 2000). This would especially be the case during the Swedish Presidency. The Swedish government emphasised that the ND was in the interest of the Union as a whole.

The ND, which in general stands for several of the main concerns of the Swedish Presidency – such as the enlargement, EU-Russia relations and environmental protection – is also a priority in the Presidency programme. It is stated that the ND provides an “important platform for developing the EU’s commitment to the Baltic Sea region.” The Baltic Sea region can here be seen as the Swedish geographical focus in the ND regime. The ND should be given “more concrete content based on the special character of the region” and it should “strengthen cooperation across the EU’s external borders in northern Europe” (Swedish Presidency, 2001:17).

The programme further set out that the Presidency “aims at follow[ing] up the EU guidelines and action plan for the Northern Dimension for the period 2000-2003.” Since the launch of the ND, there had been many reports and declarations but little action. At the Feira European Council, one agreed that this had to change. “The Swedish Presidency will grasp the opportunity to do just that.” (Patten & Lindh, 2000). This shows how tasks on the Swedish Presidency agenda were inherited from

previous presidencies. Special attention should be given to the EU's relations with Kaliningrad and it was seen as essential to develop regional cooperation for example through the CBSS, the BEAC and the AC. Unnecessary duplication should be avoided and synergies between the regional organisations should be fully exploited (Swedish Presidency, 2001:1; Patten & Lindh, 2000. See also Söder, 2000).

The goal of the Presidency was to integrate the ND as “a permanent part of EU work in different sectors” through the establishment of efficient and transparent implementations mechanisms and well-structured follow-up procedures (Swedish Presidency, www.eu2001.se). Consequently, the Swedish strategy was to focus on the decision-making procedures of the ND regime. This, together with the emphasis on the important role of the Commission, would firmly establish the ND on the Union's agenda. To focus on the continuity of the ND process was considered especially important as one did not expect the following Belgian and Spanish presidencies to promote it to the same extent (Interviewee 11, 27/05/2002). Hence, one can assume that the Swedish government perceived the Nordic presidencies as fundamental for the further development of the ND.

The Swedish Presidency had more or less *carte blanche* to fill the ND basket with concrete content after the Finnish Presidency's promotion of it (Ojanen, 25-26 October 2001). This also became an important task for the Swedish government in order to strengthen the ND on the Union's agenda (Interviewees 6 and 21, 29/04/2002). It was believed that “the best way to achieve concrete result is to focus on the most pressing priorities that will have an impact throughout Europe.” (Patten & Lindh, 2000). Consequently, the Presidency stressed that it should work to achieve

concrete progress in the three priority areas according to the Action Plan, i.e., the environment including nuclear safety, the fight against organised crime and the situation of Kaliningrad (cf. Magnusson, 2001:1). Already in the preparations of the Action Plan, Sweden promoted these three issue-areas in view of its forthcoming Presidency term. These areas would shift the focus of the ND to the Baltic Sea region; an area of core Swedish regional interests (cf. Catellani, 2003:19).

As regards the *environmental sector*, the long-term goal of the Swedish government is to manage the pollution in the Baltic Sea. The Presidency believed that the EU's engagement for a clean Baltic Sea should be further developed than what was stated in the Action Plan. Through utilising existing regional co-operation structures in Northern Europe, the EU should be able to more efficiently use its resources and to achieve better results in this field. This shows the pronounced role Sweden attributed to other regional organisations for the efficient implementation of the ND.

As expressed by the Secretary of State Sven-Eric Söder (2000), it was important to ratify the Kyoto protocol and to deal with the large discharge of carbon dioxin in order to address the climate change. This also belonged to the general Presidency ambition in the environmental field (Regeringskansliet, 2000:10). Concerning the nuclear safety problems in Northwest Russia, a conclusion of the negotiations on the MNEPR was seen as fundamental (Patten & Lindh, 2000. See further Chapter V). Thus, Sweden stressed this part of the ND decision-making procedures for a more efficient implementation of the regime.

The Presidency further found it important to develop the Action Plan and to implement it efficiently as regards the *fight against organised crime* (Söder, 2000). This Swedish focus can be explained by the increased role it wanted to give the CBSS and its Task Force on Organised Crime (Catellani, 2003:19).

The third Swedish ND priority was the situation in *Kaliningrad*. The Presidency found it important to discuss how the arrangements for trade and border-crossings to Kaliningrad would look like, and to regulate the conditions for Kaliningrad's access to the Internal Market. The Commission should in this perspective prepare a Communication on Kaliningrad to carry the work forward, and Patten and Lindh should undertake a joint visit to Kaliningrad in February (Söder, 2000; Patten & Lindh, 2000).

Sweden also prioritised the new technology in the ND regime, which fitted its general Presidency interest. Better synergy between EU funding instruments and other sources of financial support should further be encouraged. As stated by Patten & Lindh (2000), "We need to ensure that it is possible for projects financed under different funding mechanisms [PHARE, TACIS and INTERREG] to work together where that would bring added value.". Increased synergy between both the EU's financial instruments and other sources of financial support was thus considered an important ND regime value.

Already at the Foreign Ministers' Conference in 1999, Sweden made the commitment to organise a follow-up during its Presidency. This Second Foreign Ministers' Conference should review progress on the implementation of the Action

Plan, and establish a follow-up mechanism for reviewing progress and providing policy guidance for further action. A 'Full Report' on the ND would, according to the Feira Conclusions, be presented at the Göteborg European Council in June 2001.

In addition, the Swedish government wished to develop the Union's transatlantic cooperation in both Arctic and Northern issues (Magnusson, 2001:1-2; Söder, 2000; Patten & Lindh, 2000; Lindh, 25/02/2002). Finally, the Presidency emphasised that the ND should be seen as an EU policy approach that concerned all the member-states, not just the northern ones (Interviewees 6 and 21, 29/04/2002).

1.3 Presidency Achievements in the Northern Dimension Field

One of the main Presidency objectives was to fill the ND with more concrete results, and the position of the ND was indeed strengthened during the Swedish Presidency – in the EU as well as in transatlantic relations – although not being accentuated in the Presidency's list of concrete results. As Sweden chose to prioritise the enlargement process and achieved the political breakthrough one had aimed for, this also benefited the development of the ND. Also the second Presidency theme of environmental protection was compatible with the development of the ND.

As noticed, *strengthened relations to Russia*, progress in the *three priority fields* of environment, the fight against organised crime and Kaliningrad, and the organising of a *second Foreign Ministers' Conference*, as well as preparing a *Full Report on the Northern Dimension*, were singled out as important topics to work for. The Swedish

Presidency further emphasised an increased synergy between the EU's financial instruments. Swedish accomplishments in these areas, together with other interests and achievements will be assessed in this section.

1.3.1 Strengthened Relations with Russia

The Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson had a strong personal interest in reinforcing the relations to Russia, and the EU-Russia co-operation was given a pronounced position both in the Presidency programme and during the six months in office. In the EU-Russia relations, special focus should be given to sectors such as the situation in Kaliningrad, environment and nuclear safety, and the fight against organised crime; Swedish general ND priorities. This shows how the Swedish government tried to influence Russia to adopt the values and norms of the ND regime that Sweden found important. Furthermore, the continued implementation of the Common Strategy on Russia and an intensified political dialogue were seen as important.

As regards the *political dialogue* with Russia, Anna Lindh, Chris Patten and Javier Solana visited Russia on 14-15 February 2001, and President Vladimir Putin was a guest of honour at the informal Stockholm European Council meeting in March 2001. Moreover, Persson went together with Prodi to Moscow at an EU-Russia Summit with Putin in May, where a high level group was assigned with the task to develop the concept of a 'Common European Economic Space' (Statsrådsberedningen, 01/07/2001:7-10; Bengtsson, 2002:213; EU-Russia Summit, 17/05/2001§14).

The Presidency structured together with the Commission the work with the EU-Russia energy dialogue. Possible co-operation areas within four sectors were identified: infrastructure, energy efficiency (including environment issues), strategies and energy balances (EU-Russia Summit, 17/05/2001§22; Statsrådsberedningen, 01/07/2001:7-10). The Presidency also tried to reach an agreement on the trade conflict between the EU and Russia. The economic dialogue was resumed on the level of finance ministers and the Presidency (EU-Russia Summit, 17/05/2001§13, 20). The security dialogue including Russian engagement in crisis prevention and management was strengthened and a dialogue with Russia was initiated on co-operation in JHA (EU-Russia Summit, 17/05/2001§11-12, 23-24).

The Presidency further supported judicial reforms in Russia, and concrete discussions were initiated between the EU and Russia within the framework of the PCA. The Swedish Presidency also promoted a Russian membership in the WTO (EU-Russia Summit, 17/05/2001§19; Statsrådsberedningen, 01/07/2001:22; Bengtsson, 2002:213).

At the various EU-Russia meetings during the Presidency, several statements were made about the importance of closer co-operation between the EU and Russia. However, the output was limited to initiated discussions in different issue-areas rather than concrete decisions. Yet, the initiation of such discussions is not without significance although Sweden was not able to conclude all of them during its Presidency.

The Presidency was unable to reach the level of achievement many had hoped for, partly because of Russian disinterest and bureaucratic manner. There has also been some criticism in this area. Some member-states considered the Swedish Presidency being too weak *vis-à-vis* Russia, and that it focused more upon common concerns instead of divergent interests, such as criticising Russia for the Chechen war (Bengtsson, 24-25 October 2001; Ruin, 2002:133-135; Tallberg, ed. 2001:159; Bengtsson, 2002:213).

Following an initiative by the Swedish Presidency, a *limited European Investment Bank (EIB) special action for environmental projects in northwest Russia*, notably in St Petersburg and Kaliningrad, was discussed at the ECOFIN working lunch of 12 March 2001 (European Commission, 05/06/2001:2). An agreement was reached, which constitutes a concrete achievement during the Presidency. This was strongly supported by Russia, which believed that the important projects in the ND framework in order to strengthen security, stability and sustainable development needed to have a sound financial foundation. The expansion of the operations of the EIB to cover Russia was seen as an appropriate solution (see Ivanov, 11-12 November 1999; Khristenko, 09/04/2001). This matter also highlights one of the priority areas of the Swedish Presidency, namely environmental protection.

The criteria considered by the Council were summarised by the Presidency: (1) Projects should be assessed and approved on a case-by-case basis by the EIB; (2) they should have a strong environmental objective and be of significant interest for the EU; (3) the EIB should co-operate and co-finance with other IFIs in order to ensure reasonable risk sharing and appropriate project conditionality; (4) the

aggregate volume of loans should be subject to an indicative ceiling of 100 million euros; and (5) Russia had to honour its international financial obligations, including those to the Paris Club (European Commission, 05/06/2001:6).

At the Stockholm European Council of 23-24 March, it was concluded that “the Union should open up EIB lending for selected environmental projects [in the Baltic Sea basin of Russia], according to the specific criteria decided by the Council” (Statsrådsberedningen, 01/07/2001:22). This development was welcomed by Russia (see EU-Russia Summit, 17/05/2001§31). Possible projects could be waste water management, water supply projects, waste and hazardous waste disposal sites and investments in helping to limit the environmental impact of new infrastructure or industrial projects under the ND. Russia suggested that a second step could be to involve the EIB in infrastructure projects (Khristenko, 09/04/2001).

Following this agreement, the Commission considered it appropriate to provide a Community guarantee to the EIB to allow it to sign loan operations under this special lending action under the ND, and it proposed a Council decision on the topic (European Commission, 05/06/2001:2-3). In the decision it is written that the Community shall grant the EIB “a global guarantee in respect of all payments not received by it but due in respect of credits opened, in accordance with its usual criteria, for investment projects carried out under this special lending action” (European Commission, 05/06/2001:7, article 1). The intention was that this should strengthen the environmental protection in the area.

The initiative to open up EIB loans for environmental projects in Russia and the linked Community guarantee, can be seen as an example of how the ND regime procedures and rules were modified during the Swedish Presidency. Thus, an internal change of the regime took place, without, however, altering the very orientation and principles of the ND as such. For the first time it became possible to get Community resources – EIB loans – for projects in Russia under the ND.

In order to intensify the work on improving *nuclear safety and the management of nuclear waste* in Northwest Russia, the Presidency found it necessary to promote a successful conclusion of the negotiations on the MNEPR (Magnusson, 2001:5). The negotiations were indeed advanced, and it was agreed at the EU-Russia Summit in May 2001 that a signature before the end of the Swedish Presidency was a priority by the two parties. Still, a conclusion did not happen during the Swedish term in office (EU-Russia Summit, 17/05/2001§28. See also Bengtsson, 2002:212-213).

Another priority, to a certain extent separated from the more general relations with Russia, was to emphasise the *situation in Kaliningrad*. During its Presidency, Sweden initiated concrete discussions with Russia on the situation in Kaliningrad within the framework of the PCA, which were seen as fundamental for the enlargement process. Sweden also wanted and succeeded in getting an Action Plan on Kaliningrad (Statsrådsberedningen, 01/07/2001:22; Herolf, 1999:64; Interviewee 20, 02/05/2002; Bengtsson, 2002:212-213).

The Commission presented a Communication on Kaliningrad during the Presidency, which constituted a good basis for further work in this area. Its main aim was to

contribute to a debate the EU should launch with Russia (including Kaliningrad), Lithuania and Poland, on issues that would affect their common post-enlargement future. It stressed the importance of addressing existing problems confronting Kaliningrad in areas such as environment, unemployment and poverty, the fight against organised crime, and health care and communicable diseases, as well as economic development. Practical measures to improve border management and facilitate border-crossing procedures were suggested, as well as initiatives in the transport and energy sectors. The visa issue was highlighted since visa and passport would be required after the enlargement for Russians crossing Lithuania to Kaliningrad (European Commission, 17/01/2001:2-11).

Russia acknowledged the existing problems in Kaliningrad. However, the Russian focus during the Swedish Presidency was on this visa issue. It underlined the immense importance of introducing a favourable visa-free system for Russian inhabitants after the enlargement, particularly in the Kaliningrad region (Khristenko, 09/04/2001). Russia stressed that the Polish and Lithuanian intentions to introduce a compulsory visa system would severely limit the free movement of Russian citizens. Such a 'dividing-line' would transform the region into a large 'reserve' within Europe's boundaries. Russia also highlighted the growing imbalance in socio-economic developments between the Kaliningrad region and its neighbours, which started to increase in 2000 when Poland and Lithuania began to pull away from the region, focusing instead on EU programmes (Jegorov, 09/04/2001). Hence, there are several Russian concerns as regards the common values of the ND regime, which are not reflected to the same extent by other partner countries.

The situation of Kaliningrad is integrated in the composite character of the Northern Dimension regime, and belonged during the Swedish Presidency to one of three ND areas in focus. However, in some cases, the discussion on Kaliningrad is lifted out and treated as an area of its own, which also was the case during the latter Danish Presidency (see Chapter VI). This is possible as Kaliningrad is seen as a pilot region within the framework of the ND in which many of the problems in the Baltic Sea region are concentrated. Solutions found to the problems in this specific region could be applied to the broader ND area.

1.3.2 The Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership

The environmental sector was one of the three Swedish promoted issue-areas in the ND. The above-mentioned decision at the Stockholm European Council in March to encourage EIB loans to Russia and the promotion of the MNEPR agreement constitute two important steps during the Presidency to strengthen the environmental protection in the region. Another notable achievement that also is central for the financing of the ND is the 'Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership' (NDEP). Instead of promoting a specific EU budget-line for the ND, which Swedish officials considered as being a rather futile move, they emphasised the significance of engaging IFIs in the region.

On 9 March 2001, a high-level meeting hosted by the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB) took place in Helsinki to discuss key issues related to the financing of infrastructure and environmental investments in the ND area. It was attended by the EIB, the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation, the European Bank for

Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Nordic Environmental Finance Corporation, the Council of Europe Development Bank, the Swedish EU Presidency, the European Commission, and Finnish and Belgian representatives. On a proposal by the EBRD, the meeting suggested to establish a Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership, with the aim to launch a more structured and regular cooperation between IFIs, the Commission, bilateral and multilateral donors and the transition countries concerned (Steering Group of the NDEP, 2002:3). This shows the importance of IFIs for the development and implementation of the ND.

The meeting established a Working Group to discuss the NDEP proposal under the co-chairmanship of the Swedish Presidency and the EBRD, with the participation of the EIB, the NIB, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the Commission. In its report, submitted to the EU Presidency, it recommended that a NDEP Fund should be established (Council of the European Union, 05/07/2001:5).

At the Göteborg European Council in June, the NDEP was finally adopted and it stated that the NDEP would help mobilising support for environmental and nuclear safety projects, *inter alia* through a pledging conference establishing the Support Fund, being held before the end of the year. For this reason, the Board of Directors of the EBRD approved the specific rules and established a set of principles of the Support Fund in December 2001. However, this conference did not occur until the Danish Presidency in 2002 (see EBRD, 2001; Göteborg European Council, 2001§64. See also European Commission, 05/06/2001:3-5; Statsrådsberedningen, 01/07/2001:22).

Sweden succeeded with its goal to launch a NDEP during its Presidency (Interviewee 8, 30/04/2002; Interviewee 20, 02/05/2002). Lindh further stressed that this represents the kind of environmental co-operation “that gives us the added value and synergy we strive for in the Northern Dimension”, which shows the high Swedish priority of protecting the environment (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 09/04/2001).

The rationale behind the NDEP is to encourage Russia to pay more attention and resources to environmental protection. Its ambition is to support and promote investment financing and the implementation of environmental, energy efficiency and nuclear safety projects in the transition countries of the ND area. It aims at co-ordinating efforts by mobilising and combining financial resources to tackle environmental problems spilling over from Northwest Russia, in particular the Kola Peninsula, into the area around the Baltic and Barents seas (European Commission, 05/06/2001:6; Council of the European Union, 05/07/2001:2; Interviewee 9, 27/05/2002). The ND regime value of increased financial synergy is thus stressed by the NDEP.

There are currently two main pillars of the NDEP: (1) an *organisational structure* – the Steering Group composed by the Commission, Russia, the EBRD, the NIB, the World Bank and the EIB; and (2) a *funding mechanism* – the Support Fund, established during the Danish Presidency in 2002 (Steering Group of the NDEP, 2002:2 ff. See further Chapter VI). Its structure is the following:

- The Steering Group discusses policy and strategy for the partnership; identifies suitable projects; secures effective IFI cooperation; selects lead managers for individual projects; addresses project funding arrangements; proposes projects to the Support Fund for grant co-financing; and ensures effective consultation with bilateral and multilateral bodies.
- The chair of the Steering Group and its Secretariat rotates annually among the IFIs. It makes progress reports to the EU ministers.²⁶
- The Assembly of Contributors of the Support Fund approves projects proposed by the Steering Group and decides on a consensus basis the allocations of grant funds to specific projects. It works closely with the Steering Group to oversee the implementation of projects. Its chair is initially held by the biggest contributor, and it may decide to set up an Operations Committee for the NDEP nuclear window.
- An IFI is appointed lead manager for each individual project. The Procurement Policies and Rules of the lead IFI, based on international competitive bidding, will apply to the financing from the Fund.
- The EBRD manages the Support Fund on behalf of its Assembly of Contributors (Steering Group of the NDEP, 2002:7-10).

The NDEP has two windows: one for environmental projects and one for nuclear safety. The Steering Group has identified 12 potential environmental projects, and 16 nuclear waste management projects. The St Petersburg and Kaliningrad wastewater projects are prioritised areas for action, in addition to clean-up projects concerning the storage of nuclear waste from the Barents Sea area (Council of the European Union, 05/07/2001:3-4; Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 01/06/2001).

The conclusion of the MNEPR agreement has been seen as a precondition to initiate NDEP nuclear-related operations (Patten, 09/07/2002; European Commission

IP/02/1024, 09/07/2002). After some delay, which might be seen as a weakness for the NDEP, the MNEPR agreement was finally signed at a meeting in Stockholm on 21 May 2003, thus opening the nuclear window of the NDEP. The MNEPR is the instrument that addresses the most important legal questions associated with Western assistance in Russia, in particular access to sites, tax exemption and liability. The Steering Group will in this area work in close coordination with the MNEPR Committee.

In some ways the NDEP can be seen constituting the foundation for a 'sub-regime' within the broader ND composite regime (see discussion in Chapter III). It focuses on one of the issue-areas involved. It emphasises one of the collective challenges in the region that is important to tackle through multilevel cooperation and joint projects, namely the environmental and nuclear safety problems. It involves clear decision-making mechanisms and rules for the concrete implementation of joint projects, and it includes a funding mechanism.

1.3.3 The Second Foreign Ministers' Conference

Already at the Foreign Ministers' Conference on the Northern Dimension in 1999, Sweden promised to organise a high-level follow up, which it did on 9 April 2001. The discussions at the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference were based on working papers presented by the Presidency and the Commission. The focus was on the three areas highlighted at the Feira European Council: environment including nuclear safety, fight against organised crime, and Kaliningrad.

²⁶ The NIB started as its chair in mid-2001, and was followed by the EBRD.

The purpose with the Conference was to provide political guidance and to map out further action to develop the ND initiative. It should further review progress made in implementing the Action Plan, and the Swedish Presidency together with the Commission should subsequently draw up a complete report on the progress of work on the ND, to be presented at the Göteborg Summit in June 2001 (Swedish Presidency, 03/04/2001. See also Söder, 01/09/2001).

Participating at the Conference were the ministers of foreign affairs, secretaries of state or EU ambassadors of the member-states and the seven non-EU partner countries, the High Representative, and the Commissioner for External Relations. Participating as observers were the European Parliament, the ESC, the Committee of the Regions, the EBRD, the EIB, the NIB, the IBRD, representatives from the Northern Dimension Business Forum and the EU ambassadors of the USA and Canada (Swedish Presidency, 03/04/2001).

With experience from the first Foreign Ministers' Conference, the Swedish government scheduled the Conference in connection to an ordinary General Affairs Council and the Co-operation Council with Russia in order to attract as many ministers as possible. As a consequence, a majority of the member-states and the partner countries were represented by their ministers, and the Russian delegation was chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Khristenko. Due to practical and schematic reasons, the Conference was held in Luxembourg. This also fitted Swedish interests as it was stressed during the Presidency term that the ND should be seen as a

framework important for all the member-states, not only the Nordic ones (Lindh, 25/02/2002; Interviewee 23, 19/09/2002).

At the Conference, the Presidency emphasised the implementation of the Action Plan and prioritised further actions within the three areas emphasised at the Feira European Council meeting much thanks to Swedish efforts. These priority fields were recognised by the Conference participants (Swedish Presidency, Conclusions of the Chair, 09/04/2001).

As regards *environment including nuclear safety*, the Presidency considered that the handling of spent nuclear waste, unsafe nuclear reactors and other environmental priority projects required urgent action. Here, the NDEP was considered important and the conclusion of the MNEPR was emphasised. It also underlined the importance to consider ways of combating transboundary environmental threats in the Arctic region.

Concerning the situation in *Kaliningrad*, the Swedish Presidency found that the Commission's Communication on Kaliningrad constituted an important basis for formulating EU policies towards this region. Co-operation on Kaliningrad was seen as well suited for the ND as it directly involved several partner countries. This shows how Sweden emphasised the Russian region of Kaliningrad as an important and justified issue-area to promote in the ND regime.

In the area of *co-operation against organised crime*, the Baltic Sea Task Force on Organised Crime under the CBSS was seen as an efficient body related to the ND,

which shows the contribution of the CBSS to the development of the ND (see also Filtenborg *et al.*, 2002:400). The Presidency considered it imperative to continue and develop ongoing activities such as measures against trafficking in human beings, illegal immigration and stolen vehicles. Rapid implementation of the EU-Russia Action Plan on Organised Crime should also be prioritised. Hence, Sweden emphasised the significance of other related documents and co-operation bodies besides those explicitly associated with the ND for the development of the regime.

As regards other sectors of the ND, the Presidency underlined the importance of an active participation of the Commission, member-states and other stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region Energy Co-operation (BASREC) process for successful implementation of priority actions in the *energy* field. Further attention and resources were seen as needed to tackle *communicable diseases* and antimicrobial resistance. The Task Force on Communicable Diseases established in Kolding in June 2000 by the CBSS was seen as important, which, together with BASREC and the Baltic Sea Task Force on Organised Crime, again shows the significant role Sweden attributed to other regional organisations, especially the CBSS, in the development of the ND. The Presidency further stressed the great potential in the region to develop the *e-economy*; a sector in which Sweden sees itself as a frontrunner and which was emphasised as a general Presidency theme. Finally, *border crossing facilities*, procedures and infrastructure links needed to be improved (Swedish Presidency Discussion Paper, 09/04/2001).

Sweden was of the opinion that the co-operation between the EU and regional organisations should be further developed: “Synergies should be increased and best

use should be made of available resources, through an efficient division of labour among the regional bodies, building on their respective competencies and geographical coverage.” (Swedish Presidency Discussion Paper, 9.4.2001). A division of labour among the organisations involved was seen as an important value within the ND regime. This also shows, again, to what extent Sweden chose to emphasise the role of regional organisations in the ND framework during its Presidency. Further co-ordination and streamlining of the respective activities of the EU and other regional organisations, and the establishment of a division of labour between them was seen as being beneficial for the co-operation in the Baltic Sea region and the implementation of the ND. This would mean a more efficient implementation, more concrete results, less duplications, overlaps and structures, as well as fewer meetings.

It was agreed at the Conference that regional organisations promote common values, a harmonisation of regulatory frameworks and concerted operative action. Hence, regional organisations can be seen as central actors in delivering the regime values, rules and norms to the partner countries in the ND framework. These organisations also presented proposals at the Conference.

The Presidency also underlined the need to develop review mechanisms to strengthen co-ordination and structure follow-up activities; a matter that also figured among Russian priorities (Khristenko, 09/04/2001). Following some Swedish suggestions, it was decided that annual progress reports would be presented to the European Council by the Commission and the Council (see Swedish Presidency Discussion Paper, 09/04/2001). Yearly ND Conferences altering between Ministerial and Senior

Officials levels should be organised to provide required political guidance for further action. There should also be a 'Northern Dimension Forum' at regular intervals with broad participation from the Business Community and from all parts of society (sub-national and non-governmental actors) (Swedish Presidency, Conclusions of the Chair, 09/04/2001. See also Magnusson, 2001:4-5). These Swedish suggestions constitute important aspects of the decision-making procedures it wanted to build up and further develop in the ND regime.

1.3.4 A Full Report on Northern Dimension Policies

As invited by the Feira European Council in 2000, a 'Full Report on Northern Dimension Policies' was prepared by the Swedish Presidency in co-operation with the Commission, and endorsed at the Göteborg European Council (Feira European Council, 2000§1.55. 76). It was based on the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference and it aimed at highlighting results and ongoing activities achieved so far and mapping out future lines of action for the time frame of the Action Plan 2000-2003 (Swedish Presidency, Discussion Paper, 09/04/2001).

The three sectors highlighted by Feira were emphasised, but other areas were treated as well, such as energy, public health, forestry, IT and telecommunications, transport, research, regional and cross-border cooperation, trade and investment promotion. Cooperation in the areas of culture, education, vocational training and youth were added by the Swedish Presidency. These areas, which all involve the participation of regional, sub-regional and sub-national bodies, are seen as strengthening common

values within the ND regime and as contributing to the socio-economic development of the region (Council of the European Union, 12/06/2001:2, 17).

It is mentioned that the EU enlargement in the region will strengthen the internal EU aspects of the ND (Council of the European Union, 12/06/2001:3). With this reasoning in the Full Report, the Northern Dimension regime could eventually be transformed, resulting from a change of the principles it is based upon. It could come to focus less on co-operation across the Union's external borders, and more on related internal EU policies of the ND.

The most important part of the Full Report for the Swedish government was to secure the ND as a well-established part of policy-making within the EU and in relation to the partner countries (Magnusson, 2001:5). The report suggests a number of procedures in order to develop strengthened and flexible mechanisms for cooperation and follow-up procedures. Many of these were initially included in the Swedish Discussion Paper and are found in the Conclusions of the Chair of the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference:

- annual progress reports submitted by the Commission to the European Council,
- regular meetings of senior officials in the 15+7 format,
- closer interaction between the EU and relevant regional bodies,
- regular foreign ministers' conferences to review progress, provide political guidance and follow-up proposals,
- national forums organised by the ESC in the partner countries,

- biannual high level forums facilitated by the CBSS, bringing together governmental and non-governmental partners, the business community, organised civil society and IFIs (Council of the European Union, 12/06/2001:12).

These elements highlight the ND decision-making procedures for its further development and implementation after the end of the first Action Plan. This would further secure the continuity of the ND process, which was an important Swedish priority (Interviewee 9, 27/05/2002).

The report also sets up recommendations for further actions that could be undertaken by a variety of EU and non-EU actors, which also ensures the continuity of the ND process with a focus on concrete results according to Swedish wishes. One such recommendation, which explicitly follows Swedish interests, is to create an efficient division of labour among the EU and other regional organisations in the area (Council of the European Union, 12/06/2001:12-14).

The role of the Commission in the implementation of the Action Plan was emphasised in order to ensure the continuity and efficiency of the ND process, which also was stated in the Presidency conclusions (Göteborg European Council, 2001§64). This role was especially seen as important by Swedish officials as the presidencies vary and not all emphasise the ND to the same extent (Interviewee 11, 27/05/2002). It is also mentioned that the further development of the initiative, including policies, procedures and arrangements from 2003 and beyond, should be initiated well in advance of that date, which also illuminates the Swedish emphasis on the continuity of the process (Council of the European Union, 12/06/2001:18).

1.3.5 A Northern eDimension Action Plan

A prioritised and much promoted issue on the Swedish Presidency agenda was the new technology, which also was the case in the ND area (cf. Marin, 2003:52-53). In January, the CBSS decided to develop a sector-specific Northern eDimension Action Plan (NeDAP) in partnership with the Commission. This was adopted at a ministerial meeting in Riga in September 2001 by the Information Society Ministers of the CBSS and the European Commissioner for Enterprise and Information Society (Council of the Baltic Sea States, 07/06/2001; Riga Ministerial Meeting, 28/09/2001).

The objective of the NeDAP is to provide added value through accelerating the transition to information society in the region, ensuring greater cooperation and integration amongst the states comprised in the ND, improving the environment for initiatives and investments, and supporting the implementation of a sound and harmonised regulatory framework.

It is coordinated by the group of Senior Officials of the Information Society with observers from the business and research community, and meets 2-4 times per year with the responsibility to monitor and follow up the NeDAP. A presiding country is selected for one year (or 6 months), and Sweden was decided as the first one (Northern eDimension Action Plan, 28/09/2001). Seven priorities for action – Action lines – have been identified: High Speed Research Networks and Advanced Broadband Applications; ICT Security; eSkills; eCommerce; eGovernment; eIndicators; and eEnvironment. For each Action line, a lead country is appointed for

the management of its implementation. The NeDAP further builds upon the eEurope and eEurope+ Action Plans²⁷, and national and regional eInitiatives.

The NeDAP can be seen as a regional initiative in which the CBSS plays a leading role and where different entities, regional organisations, governmental institutions, business, research communities and the European Commission are expected to participate. It is dependent on the cooperation of the private sector. Funding for the NeDAP can come from national budgets and funds, from the EU through its PHARE, TACIS, TEMPUS, INTERREG III, eContent and MAP programmes, from actors in the region and IFIs (European Commission, A5/MR D(2002), 2002).

Sweden contributed to the development of the NeDAP during its Presidency term, and it was included in the Full Report (see Council of the European Union, 9804/01, 2001§2.7). The very implementation of the NeDAP was launched at a seminar organised in Tampere, Finland, in November 2001.

The NeDAP illustrates again the role other regional organisations have in the development of the ND regime (Interviewee 13, 30/01/2003). Moreover, as we have seen in Chapter III, paragraph 1, in a 'composite policy', one may distinguish between two dimensions of policy: the macro and the meso levels of policy. The *macro* policy is composed of a range of distinctive *meso* policies, which simultaneously are parts of other EU policy areas and share their instruments in order to achieve the objectives. At this level, the principal policy-makers are sectoral ones in both the Commission and the member-states. The NeDAP can be seen as one of

²⁷ Commission framework programmes in the IT field.

the meso policies that together build up the composite character of the ND regime, or the macro policy level. Indeed, it was sectoral policy-makers both in the Commission and in the participating states that took part at its founding meeting. It can also be seen as a potential sub-regime within the ND, addressing one of the issue-areas involved, identifying the relevant challenge that needs joint action, and presenting procedures for the further development and implementation of the initiative.

1.3.6 Other Achievements

Throughout the Presidency, the Swedish government highlighted the need for the Commission to *simplify and align the procedures for EU financial instruments of relevance for the ND cross-border co-operation*, namely PHARE, TACIS and INTERREG (Swedish Presidency Discussion Paper, 09/04/2001). This need was also recognised at the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference. It constituted a prioritised topic of Russia during the Conference and was considered a measure that could serve as one of the financial foundations of the ND (Khristenko, 09/04/2001).

A higher degree of interoperability and co-ordination between the instruments was seen as making the implementation of the ND more efficient, and this also constituted a regime value prioritised by the Swedish Presidency (Interviewee 11, 27/05/2002; Interviewee 9, 27/05/2002). This co-ordination can further be seen as strengthening a part of the procedures within the ND regime, which also was in the interest of Sweden.

The Commission also decided to underline this co-ordination during the Presidency term. Since it judged that close co-operation already existed between PHARE and INTERREG as 'Joint Programming Documents' had been produced, it focused on the alignment of INTERREG and TACIS.²⁸ Consequently, the Commission presented 'A Guide to Bringing INTERREG and TACIS Funding Together', in which it is stated that "the Commission shall seek effective co-ordination and consistency with programmes financed through the Structural Funds, Community external assistance programmes and bilateral assistance initiatives." (European Commission, *A Guide to Bringing INTERREG and TACIS Funding Together*, 2001:2-4, 14-15. See also European Commission, 29/03/2001:6-7 and European Commission, 27/10/2000, 5.1.5.).²⁹ Consequently, the co-ordination between the programmes was advanced.

On 4 April 2001, the Swedish Presidency organised together with the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs a 'Tallinn Business Forum', with the aim to provide an opportunity for the business community to channel their views to the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference. The forum presented recommendations such as the need to establish a favourable business climate, with adherence to the principles of fair competition, equal treatment and non-discrimination – principles accordingly embraced in the ND regime. It was suggested that the Commission could set up a system of benchmarking for best practice in the ND business environment and that it

²⁸ The purpose with this regulation was to ensure the smooth transition from INTERREG/PHARE CBC to post-enlargement internal INTERREG programmes.

²⁹ For TACIS, encouraging CBC is a relatively new priority. For INTERREG, promoting co-operation across external borders of the EU, rather than across its internal borders, also presents particular challenges. INTERREG and TACIS are two different instruments with different aims, criteria, budgets, decision-making and implementation procedures, as well as different governing legislation. It was considered important to link the two procedures in order to facilitate the implementation of CBC, in particular as regards Russia (European Commission, *A Guide to Bringing INTERREG and TACIS Funding Together*, 2001:5-7).

could initiate a regular dialogue with the business community on topics related to realisation of ND programmes. This was well received at the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference. Other recommendations focused on IT, transport and energy (Magnusson, 2001:4; Council of the European Union, 12/06/2001:12-14).

Another priority during the Swedish Presidency was to reinforce the dialogue with the *USA and Canada* on Northern Dimension issues, which was welcomed by the participants at the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference. These two countries were consulted, and co-operation within the framework of the ND and the American Northern Europe Initiative (NEI) was initiated. Four areas were identified as particularly suitable for co-ordination: environment, health, the legal and civil society (EU-US Summit, 14/06/2001; Statsrådsberedningen, 01/07/2001:26). The position of the ND became strengthened in the transatlantic relations, which broadens the external support for the very existence of the ND regime. The regime principles and values could potentially also be enhanced through launched North American cooperation activities, directed resources and general support for cross-border cooperation in the ND region.

2. ANALYSING THE SWEDISH PRESIDENCY

The first part of this section analyses to what extent it has been possible for the Swedish government to influence the EU's foreign policy agenda in the field of the Northern Dimension during its Presidency term. The limitations involved as regards this influence and the Presidency's room of manoeuvre will be assessed. In the

second part, the Swedish position *vis-à-vis* the elements of the ND regime and its emphasised issue-areas are addresses. In the third part, there is an examination of the phase of the regime development process in which the Swedish Presidency was active, and how this can be characterised in concrete terms.

2.1 Presidency Functions and the Northern Dimension

2.1.1 Administration, Management and Co-ordination

As already noticed, in order to conduct the Presidency function of administration and co-ordination well, it is important to be seen as efficient. Prior to the Presidency, there was a general image of Sweden as being an efficient, open and competent country with the capacity to manage large organisational challenges as is the case when chairing the Council. The Swedish Presidency met those expectations (cf. Elgström, 2002b:45-46; Bjurulf, 2003:151). The Presidency and the agenda for the Council meetings was well prepared.

The Presidency can be seen as successful as many of the Swedish objectives were reached, yet not a real success story. This is due to the high expectations that were difficult to reach, and to the fact that Sweden still can be seen as a 'reluctant European' as the Presidency period did not seem to improve the Union's popularity among Swedish citizens (Tallberg, 28/06/2001; Tallberg, ed. 2001:37-47, 67, 226-228; Elgström, 2002a:186-188; Miles, 2002a:227-231).

Sweden had a well functioning central administration, a stable domestic political situation and an efficient bureaucracy at the time for its Presidency. Sweden also has a large experience of international contacts and international negotiations which could strengthen its presidential efficiency. Although belonging to the group of smaller member-states, lacking previous experience of chairing the EU, and not being part of the 'euro-zone', as well as having a reputation of being a rather 'federo-sceptic' country, this did not seem to influence the general performance of the Presidency in a negative manner.³⁰ The Prime-Minister's scepticism towards developing a more supranational Union was supported both by a majority of the citizens as well as by the political parties the Social Democrats co-operated with.

As the Swedish government prepared, organised and chaired all the meetings at different levels in the Council, wrote both the Presidency conclusions and the conclusions of the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference, and prepared the 'Full Report' together with the Commission, it had a large opportunity to forward its own priorities and interests *vis-à-vis* various issue-areas in the field of the ND in the wording of these texts. Hence, through this function, it could influence the EU's external relations.

Although involving important Swedish foreign policy interests, the Swedish initial support of the ND in 1997 was not as enthusiastic as one might have expected. It is possible that Swedish policy-makers initially saw the ND as a Finnish way to compete with Sweden's role in the Baltic Sea region, especially since Swedish

³⁰ Outside observers have seen Sweden as a comparatively problematic member. It has a significant EU-sceptic minority that sometimes limits the government's room of manoeuvre and it still remains outside the 'euro-zone'. This, together with the small size of the country and limited political

efforts very much were behind the recently launched BSRI by the Commission within the framework of the CBSS. At a later stage, its hesitance might have been connected to giving the EU a leading role in the area. For Sweden, it was important to strengthen the role of the CBSS and to develop regional cooperation in general terms, rather than giving the EU a more exclusive role in the area.

Prior to the launch of the ND initiative and the chairing of the EU Council, Swedish Baltic Sea policy was primarily conducted outside the framework of the EU. However, Sweden has revised its Baltic Sea policy, now acknowledging the potential of conducting Baltic Sea region co-operation within the framework of the EU. The role of the EU in this part of Europe has been intensely supported.

The text on the ND was quite limited in the Swedish Presidency programme. It is for instance given lower priority than the enlargement, environment and employment. This was also the case in the presented Swedish list of concrete Presidency results, despite of the fact that the Swedish achievements in the ND field were rather substantial.

The government took advantage of the Presidency function to prioritise regional interests to a certain degree although presenting them as being of European value. It stressed the importance of the ND and most notably of strengthened relations with Russia for the security, stability and sustainable development of Europe as a whole, and that it should not be seen as an initiative only for the Northern member-states but a Union policy.

resources, had as an effect that many expected the Swedish political elite to have difficulties in influencing the EU's political agenda during the Presidency (cf. Miles, 2002b:132-133).

The Swedish government seemed capable of combining the 'leadership' function with that of a 'mediator'. It was expected by the other member-states that Sweden would shoulder a leadership role in the Baltic Sea region and towards Russia, and it was not criticised for drawing the EU's attention to this part of its external relations. This is due to the substantial relations Sweden has with all the non-EU partner countries of the region. Sweden's active role for the general development of Baltic Sea co-operation, its emphasis on the CBSS in this, as well as its promotion of the EU enlargement in the Baltic Sea region, were further well-known Swedish preferences among the other member-states. In addition, Sweden stressed that the main aim of its Presidency was to work in the interest of the Union and to promote the European agenda – not the national one.

2.1.2 Policy Initiation and Agenda-Shaping

In its Presidency role as agenda-shaper and policy initiator, the Swedish government stressed throughout its Presidency term common EU concerns and decided to downplay the promotion of national interests. It underlined the importance of efficiency and the role of the Presidency to be a neutral broker. Swedish and EU interests seemed to concur – also in the area of the ND – which meant that Sweden could present important achievements in areas which it had prioritised whilst simultaneously respecting the neutrality norm.

Although stressing areas that are located at the core of Swedish politics, this promotion can still in an EU perspective be seen as rather modest as they already

were established policy areas on the Union's agenda, thus coinciding with European concerns. Sweden was therefore never accused of being biased. The promotion of the enlargement process proceeded the most among the three priority areas, which together with the achievements in the environmental field – a second Presidency theme – also strengthened important elements within the ND regime. Facilitating and supporting the enlargement process in the Baltic Sea region is one of the aims of the ND, and as Sweden managed to reach a political breakthrough in the accession negotiations, this also benefited the ND.

Sweden contributed to *agenda-structuring* in the field of the ND as it already prior to its Presidency term through its lobbying efforts contributed to the three-issue approach in the Feira Action Plan. This would strengthen the ND focus on the Baltic Sea region in accordance with traditional Swedish foreign policy. The three issue-areas became the centre of attention during the Swedish Presidency.

One way to influence the EU's external relations' agenda is to ensure that an issue remains on the political agenda also after the Presidency term. This strategy was used by the Swedish government. It consequently wanted to make the Commission more involved in the ND process. This was seen as especially important as Swedish officials did not expect the following Belgian and Spanish presidencies to promote the ND to the same extent as Nordic chairmen. This expectation illuminates the geographical balance within the EU. It is somewhat expected that member-states promote relations and projects within their own geographical region: southern members are for instance more prone to sponsor the Euro-Mediterranean relations, whilst northern member-states are expected to highlight the relations to Russia. The

formulations in the 'Full Report' and the Danish intention at the Göteborg European Council to organise a high-level follow-up meeting during its coming Presidency to map out future actions from 2003, ensured the continuity (Göteborg European Council, 2001§64).

Sweden stressed that more concrete action was needed in the ND field. This had also been established by the Feira European Council, which shows the linkage between the ambitions of the Swedish Presidency and prior EU decisions. As the ND already was firmly established on the EU's external agenda, it was easier for Sweden to focus upon the concrete implementation of joint projects, than was the case when Finland was chairman.

Sweden also managed to influence the Union's external relations along national priorities through including the ND on the agenda of Council meetings and international conferences, as well as in presented discussion papers. The Swedish influence on the political agenda was further facilitated by the lack of unpredicted international events that could have affected its agenda and by the fact that it developed good relations with the Russian government.

However, the duration of the Presidency term explains to some extent that expectations in some cases were higher on the Presidency than were its concrete achievements in the field of the ND. Although a large number of discussions were initiated with Russia in various fields, they still produced limited concrete outcomes during the six months in office. Yet, this explanation does not give us the entire

picture. It has become evident that Sweden managed to proceed substantially with other dossiers, such as the enlargement process, during the same period.

Many of the topics on the Swedish agenda were further inherited from previous presidencies – a fact that Sweden also underlined in order to being perceived as unbiased. The Presidency themes in the field of the ND and the centre of attention at the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference, for instance, followed the focus in the Action Plan, established at the Feira European Council. This focus had, however, been strongly promoted by Sweden. The preparation of the 'Full Report' was also encouraged by the Feira Summit. However, although many topics were positioned on the Swedish agenda by previous EU decisions – in some cases resulting from Sweden's own lobbying efforts – it was still possible to influence these fields along with its own priorities.

2.1.3 Mediation and Consensus-Building

There were high expectations that the Swedish Presidency would be an honest broker due to the small size of the country, the Swedish consensus tradition and experience of international mediation and neutrality. The role of an honest broker within the EU fitted well with the Swedish self-image and perceived history of being a “first class, skilful international mediator” (Bjurulf, 2003:151). Sweden met in general these expectations – also in the field of the ND – although stepping over the limits in the area of transparency in openly advocating its own national interests. Swedish officials generally preferred an accommodative style, trying to find broad consensus solutions. This is consistent with Swedish domestic tradition and was perceived to be

an efficient way to generate enduring compromises. However, this also meant that Sweden did not play any prominent leadership role and was seen as lacking in vision during its six months in office, except regarding the enlargement (cf. Bjurulf, 2001:7; Bjurulf, 2003:151).

As most of the Council negotiations and discussions at international forums start around some Presidency produced papers, and as the Presidency in general is in charge of drawing up a concluding compromise text at the end of the negotiations, the Presidency has an opportunity to influence the EU's foreign policy through its own terminology and choice of words in the final document. A very explicit example of this is that many of the wordings from the Presidency Discussion Paper at the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference were included in the 'Full Report', such as a division of labour between the regional organisations involved and when it comes to the further development of the ND through meetings at various levels. Some of these formulations are also found in the second Action Plan (see Chapter VI).

Moreover, the Presidency limited the discussions at the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference and at least implicitly influenced the contributions of the other participants through presenting three themes. Sweden also had the opportunity to influence the wordings in the text on the opening up of EIB loans for environmental projects in Northwest Russia. In its role as chairman together with the EBRD in the Working Group that discussed the proposal to establish a NDEP, it could influence the final text on this as well, which also was the case at the 'Tallinn Business Forum'.

2.1.4 Representation

In its function as the EU's external relations' representative, Sweden was more active than expected, which also had a positive impact on the development of the ND. The government succeeded in organising summits both with the Russian and the American President. The fact that Putin was a guest of honour at the Stockholm European Council meant a lot for the Union's dialogue with Russia.

In the general discussions with Russia, the Swedish Presidency highlighted its three promoted issue-areas in the field of the ND. In the EU-Russia relations, the Presidency contributed to the energy dialogue, discussions on the trade conflict, the economic dialogue, the security dialogue and the dialogue on co-operation in JHA, and it promoted a Russian WTO membership. In many of these dialogues, Sweden drew attention to important priorities within the ND regime.

The ND was not only a topic in the discussions with Russia, but also at international forums such as in the transatlantic dialogue. Hence, in its role as chairman, Sweden managed to draw attention to challenges and opportunities in the Baltic Sea region in various diplomatic dialogues.

Throughout the Presidency term, Sweden undertook intensive co-operation with the High Representative of the CFSP and the Commissioner for External Relations (cf. Bjurulf, 2003:148). Sweden acknowledged the role of the Commission in the EU's external relations, and prioritised a good relationship with it, not least for taking advantage of its expertise during the Presidency. For instance, the Swedish Minister

of Foreign Affairs wrote a joint article with the External Relations Commissioner on important priorities in the field of the ND just ten days prior to the beginning of the Presidency. The presented priorities in this article further makes it somewhat difficult to clearly separate the Swedish main concerns from those of the Commission. However, this also illustrates that the ND is an area in which both national and European interests concur.

There was a general support of the non-EU partner countries. The Swedish leadership also received the political backing from the other member-states although some recommended harsher Swedish attitudes towards the Russian activities in Chechnya.

2.2 Emphasised Issue-Areas and Regime Components

2.2.1 Promoted Principles, Norms and Issue-Areas

In its traditional EU policy, the Swedish government has always promoted policies, values and norms in the integration process that concur with Swedish interests. These are areas in which Sweden considers itself as a leader, such as environmental protection, gender equality, transparency, information technology (IT), the relations with Russia, and social and employment policy. The ambition has been to influence other member-states and the integration process according to Swedish convictions, thus exporting its values and policies abroad.

This was also visible during the Presidency term as the three selected themes of environment, enlargement and employment belong to traditional Swedish interests. This was the case for the ND as well. However, instead of solely aiming for influencing the member-states, it could in this field also have an impact on the non-EU partner countries. Sweden chose to stress issue-areas in the Northern Dimension regime that it promotes both in its foreign policy declaration and in its traditional EU policy, such as environment (the NDEP), IT (the Northern *e*Dimension), energy co-operation and the fight against organised crime.

The Swedish government can be seen as trying to show its rather ‘federo-sceptic’ citizens that it is possible to influence both the general integration process along national interests, but also the EU’s external agenda during its Presidency term. By promoting and highlighting traditional Swedish policies and values during its term in office, this could make the EU look more ‘Nordic’ and consequently strengthen the public support for the integration process. However, the strategy did not seem to work as regards the latter aspect.

As the geographical focus in the field of the ND was the Baltic Sea region – and above all Russia (with a particular emphasis on Kaliningrad) and the three Baltic States – it seems like it is especially these actors in the ND regime that Sweden wishes to influence along its national interests through an export of values and norms. Such an export would also have the intention to ease the ‘soft’ security challenges in the region.

The Presidency supported the general principles, values and norms within the ND regime. However, as environmental protection belonged to one of the three Presidency themes and to one of the three ND areas in focus, the *principle* of sustainable development received more attention than the other two values of security and stability. Cross-border cooperation and the importance of reducing the impact of existing dividing-lines in the region were perhaps less stressed than during the Finnish and the latter Danish presidencies. However, in comparison to its Finnish neighbour, Sweden put more emphasis on the potential of regional organisations – in particular the CBSS – and their role in the development of the ND, not least for its implementation. Hence, the regime *norm* of granting regional organisations involved certain rights can be seen as more developed during the Swedish Presidency period, which can be connected to the evolution of the regime.

Sweden also stressed the importance of gathering as many ministers as possible at the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference to get a strong political backing, as this was seen as representing an important forum for equal footing among both EU-members and non-members. The consultative approach involved and the role of the seven partner countries were highlighted throughout the Presidency period, which illuminates the strong Swedish focus on the relevant regime norm.

We have already seen that the Feira European Council established a horizontal Action Plan for the implementation of the ND across many issue-areas. Three areas were, however, emphasised, in accordance with Swedish interests: environment including nuclear safety, the fight against organised crime and the region of Kaliningrad. The Swedish focus on these three ND areas followed its general

Presidency strategy, i.e., to illuminate and focus on a limited number of issue-areas and to make these clear and comprehensible for the Swedish society so that the number of 'EU sceptic' citizens potentially also would be reduced. The three areas were also in focus in its relations with Russia, and they represent the *values* Sweden found important to stress in the regime. Despite this three-issue focus, Sweden expanded the ND into new issue-areas such as culture, education, vocational training and youth.

This Swedish narrow focus was met with some uncertainty in Finland. Finland was afraid that it would affect the horizontal approach one had within the Commission in a negative manner, and thereby potentially weaken both the internal cohesion of the Commission and its strength in the ND field. If the Commission became less involved in the process, this could threaten the Northern Dimension composite regime as a whole, and ultimately, it could be undermined as an EU policy approach. It was argued that if only three areas were emphasised, the focus on the other parts of the ND would be lost and with that also the Commission's Directorate-Generals located outside the focus area.

Hence, the Swedish approach can in a way be seen as weakening the horizontal approach and the composite character of the ND in comparison with the Finnish strategy. Whilst being seen as a regime norm by the Finns, the horizontal dimension received less attention during the Swedish Presidency.

However, some argue that Sweden did not succeed in concrete terms with its 'three-issue' approach (for instance Interviewees 10 and 19, 08/03/2002). Areas which were

the most advanced during the Presidency, in which Sweden is leading the development in Europe, such as the IT area and the Northern eDimension, were not among the three priorities. Yet, Sweden eventually revised its initial narrow approach. In the Presidency Conclusions, all the ND areas were mentioned again.

As one of the main Swedish priorities was to make the ND more concrete and to focus on its implementation phase (see further below), this could also give some explanation to why Sweden decided to focus on a more restricted number of issue-areas than was the case for Finland (Interviewee 11, 27/05/2002). It was believed that the best way to achieve concrete results was to focus on the most pressing challenges. In order to make something more substantial, a strategy could be to focus on a few issue-areas and stress the concrete accomplishments in these, rather than in all issue-areas. In relation to the composite character of the ND, when the focus is on the concrete implementation of the regime and on concrete results, it seems to be easier to put a limited number of issue-areas involved at the centre of attention.

To illustrate the difference in Presidency strategies as regards the ND, the energy sector which was important during the Finnish Presidency was not as emphasised as during the Swedish term. This was also the case for the situation in Kaliningrad, which was singled out as an important geographical area to emphasise during the Swedish Presidency. Finland was more interested in the entire border-area between Finland and Russia (Interviewee 8, 30/04/2002; Interviewees 6 and 21, 29/04/2002).

2.2.2 Decision-Making Procedures and Rules in Focus

Throughout the Presidency, Sweden seemed to focus upon the *decision-making procedures* in the ND regime and their importance for the implementation, concretisation and the further development of the initiative (see further below). These can be divided into procedures of a supranational character and those of a more intergovernmental nature.

As part of the intergovernmental procedures, Swedish officials gave a lot of attention to the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference, and therefore wanted to get more political backing for this from the other member-states than was the case of the Finnish Presidency. This political backing was ensured through the organising of the Conference between an ordinary General Affairs Council meeting and a Co-operation Council with Russia. Consequently, most EU ministers attended.

In the last decade, the Swedish government has emphasised the important role of the CBSS for the co-operation in order to address common challenges and to take advantage of joint opportunities in the region. Hence, it is rather logical that regional organisations – in particular the CBSS – had a pronounced position during the Presidency in the field of the ND. This was also stressed at the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference. Sweden presented a proposal about establishing a division of labour between them, based on their geographical coverage, in order to avoid institutional overlaps, and to ensure a more efficient use of existing resources, capabilities and their respective competencies for a more effective implementation of the ND. This can be seen as intergovernmental procedures.

Sweden had as a Presidency goal to develop implementation and review mechanisms to strengthen co-ordination and structure follow-up activities, and the 'Full Report' included decision-making procedures in order to further develop the ND regime and structure activities. Sweden succeeded in influencing the further development of the ND and ensuring its continuity through the presented list of meetings at various levels in the 'Full Report'.

Another part of the more intergovernmental decision-making procedures that would make the implementation of the ND regime more effective, was the conclusion of the MNEPR, which also was emphasised and promoted by the Presidency.

The NDEP represents an important part of the intergovernmental decision-making procedures of the ND regime, especially in terms of its financing which facilitates the concrete implementation of joint projects. Also the NeDAP symbolises such intergovernmental procedures. The Swedish Presidency played an important role in the development of these new procedures of the ND regime.

There are several similarities between the two initiatives. Both were established on proposals from identified important actors in the ND regime: the NDEP by an IFI and the NeDAP by a regional organisation. Both aim to launch a more structured and regular cooperation, consultation and coordination between the actors involved, and to mobilise and combine financial resources and realise synergies when conditions are appropriate for investment in the two different issue-areas. Both expect various actors such as IFIs, regional bodies, governmental institutions in the region, business,

research communities and the European Commission to participate. They have also identified mechanisms for the further development and implementation of the initiatives, including possible funding procedures.

Within the decision-making procedures, IFIs are important actors of the NDEP and in its Steering Group, whilst the NeDAP is coordinated by a group of Senior Officials of the Information Society with observers from the business and research community, and it was initially launched by representatives from the CBSS members and the Commission. The NeDAP is headed by a presiding country, whilst the chair of the NDEP Steering Group and its Secretariat rotates among the IFIs. The NDEP Support Fund further has an Assembly of Contributors, managed by the EBRD.

Especially the NeDAP can be seen as one of the meso policies that together build up the composite character of the ND regime, or the macro policy level, as sectoral policy-makers both in the Commission and in the participating states took part at its founding meeting. As mentioned above, the establishment of the NDEP can in some ways be seen as constituting the basis for a 'sub-regime' within the broader Northern Dimension composite regime. Also the NeDAP can be considered a potential 'sub-regime'. Like the NDEP, it focuses on one of the issue-areas and one of the challenges involved in the composite regime; it entails procedures for the further development and implementation of the initiative; and it involves a perspective of financial support (see further the discussion in Chapter VII).

Also the decision to allow the EIB to grant loans to environmental projects in Russia developed the regime procedures in the ND in order to make concrete

implementation of joint projects easier. This can be seen as a case of more supranational procedures involved in the regime. This EIB lending action, together with the establishment of the NDEP and the NeDAP, also entail a modification of the existing procedures and rules within the composite regime; thus, an *internal* change of the regime.

In addition, the fact that the government stressed the interoperability and coordination of the procedures for EU financial instruments of relevance for the ND process shows the Swedish focus on decision-making procedures – here of a more supranational character – which also would contribute to a more efficient implementation. This also represents one of the ND principles Sweden drew attention to.

We have seen in Chapter III that explicit Northern Dimension *rules* seem rather weak. However, there are rules and sanction possibilities involved in the various programmes and agreements underpinning the regime such as the EA, EEA and PCA agreements and in relation to the EU's financial instruments. There seems to be more rules involved in the supranational procedures than in the intergovernmental cooperation initiatives as described above.

There was no particular distinction made between the procedures and rules of the regime by the Presidency, and rules were only indirectly implicated through the promoted procedures. For instance, the promotion of the NeDAP also supports the implementation of a harmonised regulatory framework. In addition, as the MNEPR establishes a legal framework for assistance and co-operation activities for effective

implementation of environmental projects particularly in Northwest Russia, the Swedish promotion of a conclusion of this strengthens the implicit regime rules of the ND. Also the Swedish initiative for an EIB lending action to projects in Russia under the ND includes regime rules through its specified criteria and its specific obligations for Russia. As the NDEP Support Fund was not launched until 2002, its specific rules were not yet established during the Swedish Presidency.

2.3 Phase in the Regime Development Process

2.3.1 Regime Implementation – Filling the Northern Dimension with Concrete Activities

As the Northern Dimension Action Plan recently had been endorsed by the Feira European Council, the ND regime had moved to its implementation phase. Consequently, the main task for the Swedish Presidency became to focus on the concrete implementation of the ND and to filling it with substantial content. Sweden's strategy was to push forward a more result-oriented approach to the ND. It was also mentioned in the Presidency programme that the Swedish government aimed at following up the Action Plan for the period 2000-2003. The Presidency was of the opinion that now that it had been firmly established on the EU's external agenda much thanks to previous Finnish efforts, the time was ripe for focusing on its implementation and concentrate on concrete action.

The Swedish focus was on the *regime implementation* stage in the regime-building process. Sweden managed to influence the ND implementation phase according to its three priority areas for action, which were stressed already in the preparations for the Action Plan and which were supported by the Commission. Efforts and activities in order to contribute to the concrete implementation of the ND were visible throughout the Swedish term in office.

In its focus on the implementation phase, the Swedish strategy was to draw attention to the *decision-making procedures* within the ND, such as establishing efficient implementation and review mechanisms, well-structured follow-up procedures, and advancing financial matters (see discussion above). As discussed in Chapter III, regime decision-making procedures and rules can be seen as the instrumental part of the regime that contribute to the carrying out of the principles, objectives and norms at a more practical level. They are therefore often stressed in the implementation phase of a regime.

The Swedish strategy would also contribute to the integration of the ND as a well-established part on the EU's agenda. Implementation and review mechanisms were discussed at the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference, which focused on the concrete implementation of the Action Plan, and established by the 'Full Report'. The 'Full Report' further highlighted results and ongoing activities, and mapped out future lines of action for the timeframe of the Action Plan. Through the listed mechanisms for the implementation of ND activities and for cooperation in prioritised fields, as well as the stated recommendations for further actions, the foundations of the implementation phase of the ND regime became strengthened.

The role of the Commission was also stressed for the implementation of the ND as well as for its continuity.

Another part of the Swedish strategy to put concrete action at the centre of attention was to focus on a *limited number of issue-areas*. This was a Swedish priority already in the preparations for the Action Plan. By focusing on few issue-areas which were deemed being the most pressing ones, concrete results would be easier to achieve and to identify, not least for the Swedish public. As we have seen, the three areas Sweden wanted to stress were the same as within the Action Plan. The Second Foreign Ministers' Conference also had these three as its main focus.

Concerning the priority of *environment including nuclear safety*, Sweden suggested opening up EIB loans for selected environmental projects in Northwest Russia. Following this agreement, the Commission decided to provide a Community guarantee to the EIB to allow it to sign loan operations under this special lending action. A Council decision was taken on the topic. This constitutes a concrete Swedish achievement which contributed to the implementation of the ND regime.

Another initiative to fill the ND with concrete content in this field was the establishment of the NDEP, which would engage IFIs in the implementation of the ND. This initiative, together with the one above, advances the financing mechanisms of the ND and, as noticed, also highlights a part of the decision-making procedures involved. Also the Swedish promotion of the MNEPR agreement fits this Swedish concern for the protection of the environment.

As regards *Kaliningrad*, Sweden wanted and succeeded in getting an Action Plan on Kaliningrad during its Presidency.

Another Swedish priority in order to contribute to the implementation of the ND was to emphasise improved *interoperability between the three Community programmes* in the Northern Dimension region, i.e., PHARE, TACIS and INTERREG. This also shows the Swedish focus on decision-making procedures.

Regional organisations could further play a significant role in the implementation phase and Sweden even considered a potential division of labour between them and the Commission in the implementation of the ND. Further co-ordination and streamlining of their respective activities would mean a more efficient implementation and more concrete results.

Another concrete initiative in the implementation of the ND that was launched during the Swedish Presidency was the *Northern eDimension*. Its Action Plan was adopted in September 2001.

All these activities promoted by the Swedish Presidency contributed to filling the Northern Dimension basket with more concrete activities in order to efficiently implement it.

3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although some initial hesitation due to the character of the traditional Swedish Baltic Sea policy as being conducted outside the framework of the EU, Sweden is today a great supporter of the ND and acknowledges the value of strengthening the Union's presence in this region.

It seems possible to conclude that Sweden managed to influence the EU's external agenda in the field of the ND through its various Presidency functions, although some of the treated topics were assigned to it by previous EU decisions. In its role as agenda-shaper, Sweden advanced the ND process in many fields and it ensured the continuation of the initiative, which was one important priority of the Presidency. It based its leadership function on already established relations and previous experiences in the field, and respected the neutrality norm by presenting the ND as being of interest for the EU as a whole.

When representing the EU externally, various issue-areas in the ND were often brought up in the discussions, most notably in the transatlantic relations. As chairman, it had the opportunity to influence the final wordings on the ND through presenting discussion papers and producing final texts. However, as we have seen, due to the limited period in office, it launched more discussions and activities in this field than was possible to finalise.

Sweden has in general terms tried to influence the European integration process in line with its national policies, values and norms. The priorities in the field of the ND

during the Swedish Presidency can be directly connected to the general focus in the Swedish EU policy since its accession and to the main concerns in its foreign policy. These priorities are issue-areas in which Sweden sees itself as a frontrunner, such as environmental protection and IT.

The promotion of the NDEP, the presentation of sustainable development as one of the three main Presidency themes, the encouragement of EIB loans to Russia and the support of the MNEPR agreement, shows the extent to which Sweden has tried to strengthen the *environmental protection* in the ND area. The Swedish promotion of the Northern *eDimension*, illustrates the general Swedish interest in developing the *new technology* also in the Baltic Sea region. The initiated dialogues with Russia, the support for an action plan on Kaliningrad and the invitation of the Russian President to the Stockholm European Council highlight the importance Sweden has given to the *EU-Russia relations*. The general Swedish interest in the ND regime to include the Baltic States as new EU members was stressed through presenting the *enlargement process* as a general Presidency theme.

The Swedish Presidency supported the *general principles and norms* within the Northern Dimension regime. It accentuated the value of sustainable development, whilst giving less attention to cross-border cooperation and the horizontal dimension involved. Sweden focused on the three Feira areas – environment including nuclear safety, the fight against organised crime and the situation in Kaliningrad – which also represent the values Sweden found important to stress in the regime. Through this narrow focus, concrete accomplishments could be easier to achieve. The Swedish

strategy for handling the ND during its Presidency was thereby similar to its general Presidency ambition, i.e., to illuminate and focus on a limited number of issue-areas.

However, the main theme of the Swedish Presidency was to illuminate the *decision-making procedures* in the ND regime and their importance for the further development and implementation of the ND. This can be seen through the importance Sweden gave to the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference, through the presented list of meetings at various levels included in the 'Full Report', through the Swedish accentuation of the MNEPR, the NDEP, the NeDAP and the proposed EIB lending action, as well as through the emphasis on aligning the Union's financial instruments for a more efficient implementation of the ND. Also the Swedish proposal to establish a division of labour between various regional organisations involved, highlights this Swedish focus. The potential of regional organisations especially for the concrete implementation of the ND was underlined throughout the Presidency period. Regime *rules* were implicitly dealt with through the focus on decision-making procedures.

The Swedish government took over the Presidency when the ND regime had advanced to its *implementation* stage. The Presidency's activities therefore concentrated on filling the ND with concrete results and joint actions. This approach explains the Swedish focus on the decision-making procedures, for instance developed in the 'Full Report', which strengthened the foundations of the implementation phase. The focus on concrete implementation also gives some explanation to the Swedish focus on a limited number of issue-areas in this field. Sweden contributed to concrete achievements in fields such as the NDEP, the

NeDAP, and the EIB lending action to Russia, which together meant a strengthening of the foundation of the ND implementation phase.

At the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference, Denmark pronounced its intention to organise a high-level follow-up meeting during its pending Presidency in the second half of 2002 in order to map out future actions from 2003. The time period of the first Action Plan was from 2000 to 2003. As Denmark was the last Nordic Presidency held before the expiry of the first Action Plan, it met rather high expectations as regards its leadership potential for the further development of the ND, not least from its Nordic neighbours. Also the approaching date of the eastward enlargement influenced the approach the Danish government decided to take for its six months in office.

CHAPTER VI

THE DANISH PRESIDENCY

1. THE DANISH PRESIDENCY AND THE NORTHERN DIMENSION

1.1 General Performance of the Danish Presidency

In the second half of 2002, Denmark held the EU Presidency for the sixth time. The Presidency can be seen as rather result-oriented and most observers found it both well-prepared and efficient (see also Miles, 2003a:320; Friis, 2003b:49). Consensus-building is in general an emphasised concept by the Danes, which was seen as an advantage during the Presidency. Several EU-related meetings were organised in different cities during the Presidency with the purpose to involve the entire country (see also Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 2002:31). Denmark also decided to develop good relations with the supranational institutions of the European Commission and the European Parliament (see for instance Larsson, 2002).

As regards the *internal preconditions* for the Presidency, Denmark belongs to the group of smaller member-states, which however, did not affect the general performance of the Presidency in a negative manner. Its previous experience of chairing the EU probably contributed to the perceived efficiency.

In November 2001, Denmark elected a new liberal-conservative coalition government, based on the Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen's liberal right party (*Venstre*)³¹ and the Danish Conservative Party. The fact that the government was rather new at the time for the Presidency meant that it in some circles was blamed for presenting its priorities and planned meetings rather late. Moreover, the new immigration policy of the government with a restricted orientation, and its close co-operation with the third largest party – the far right Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*) – affected the Council discussions and caused criticism from some of the member-states (cf. Friis, 2003b:49).

Denmark has further a reputation of being one of the most 'federo-sceptic' countries (see Miles, 2003a:320). This is often coupled to its 'opt-outs' from the work in the EU in the fields of the common currency, the CFSP and JHA. The 'opt-outs' meant that the forthcoming Greek Presidency replaced Denmark and chaired the meetings in these fields, which affected its leadership potential. The former government also stressed in June 2001 that the 'opt-outs' would constrain the Danish possibilities to influence the Union according to national convictions, and that Denmark was experiencing "a real and tangible loss of influence" in these fields (Danish Government, June 2001:9). The government also believed that the 'opt-outs' "may contribute to an image of Denmark as a Member State which does not participate whole-heartedly in the EU. This has an influence on the general position of Denmark and may reduce Danish influence on the overall development of the EU" (Danish Government, June 2001:9).

³¹ For the first time since the 1920s, *Venstre* became bigger than the Social Democrats.

These views were also shared by Fogh Rasmussen's new government, claiming that the 'opt-outs' are "detrimental" to Denmark's best interests and that they must be abolished. However, it believes that if Denmark is to 'opt in', this must be done on the basis of a new referendum, held when the Danes know the content of the new EU Treaty (Statsministeriet, 26/11/2001; Fogh Rasmussen, 02/01/2003; Fogh Rasmussen, 15/01/2003). Despite the 'opt-outs' and the rather 'federo-sceptic' population, the central administration was seen as efficient by the other member-states (cf. Miles, 2003a:320; Friis, 2003b:49).

As regards the *external preconditions* for the Presidency, the Danish government faced a rather substantial Presidency agenda. The political agenda included topics such as the enlargement (which also was a Danish top priority), the mid-term review of the Common Agricultural Policy, reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, debate on the future of Europe, and reform of the Commission (Danish Government, June 2001:10).

The overall performance of the Presidency did not seem to be affected in a negative manner by the fact that the Greek and Turk Cypriots failed to agree on a UN sponsored solution for a united Cyprus. The second Irish referendum on the Nice Treaty, scheduled during the Danish Presidency, could potentially have affected the Presidency. Denmark stressed that this was an internal matter for Ireland. However, a 'no' vote would probably have affected the closure of the accession negotiations, which however did not happen. The Iraqi conflict was an external event that influenced the foreign relations' agenda of the Danish Presidency. However, the crisis removed some of the impediments for an EU agreement and it reactivated the

Franco-German partnership. Consequently, Denmark succeeded in maintaining a common EU line on this issue (cf. Pedersen, 2003; Friis, 2003b:51).

A very important international event that affected the Presidency was the hostage taking in Moscow 23-26 October 2002. Just a couple of days after this, a planned Chechen World Congress was held in Copenhagen with the participation of, amongst others, the Chechen vice Prime Minister Akhmed Sakajev. The opening of the Congress caused striking Russian protests. It was seen as a mockery against the victims of the hostage taking, and the Russian government accused Denmark for supporting Chechen terrorism (Interviewee 18, 24/09/2003). As a consequence, Russia decided to cancel its planned State visit to Denmark in November and the Presidency relocated the planned EU-Russia Summit from Copenhagen to Brussels.

The Putin government also wanted Denmark to extradite Sakajev to Russia, who was accused of having participated in a range of terrorist attacks in the late 1990s and for having been involved in the plans of the hostage taking in Moscow. Sakajev was indeed arrested by Danish authorities on 30 October. However, the Danish Department of Justice found that it did not have the required evidence as regards all the matters Sakajev was accused for in order to extradite him, and he was consequently released in early December (Espersen, 03/12/2002). Again, this caused vocal reactions from Russia, accusing Denmark for tearing down international co-operation against terrorism. Hence, the Congress and the case of Sakajev led to the worst crisis in Denmark-Russia relations in decades, which also meant that Russia

only wanted to participate as an 'observer' at the Third Foreign Ministers' Conference on the ND in October (Interviewee 5, 24/02/2003).³²

The main Danish priorities for the work of the EU are issues such as the enlargement, the safeguarding of the welfare model, to fight unemployment, safety for the citizens, sustainable development and democratic legitimacy of the EU (see Fogh Rasmussen, 15/01/2003). Many of the Danish Presidency priorities can be coupled to general national interests, which the government is trying to promote in its foreign relations (see for instance Statsministeriet, 26/11/2001). The Presidency also believed that the majority of its tasks stemmed from decisions already taken by the European Council.

The Danish ambition was to have a Presidency characterised by clear priorities, focused implementation and transparency. In the Presidency programme, there are five main topics: the enlargement; freedom, security and justice; sustainable development; safe food; and global responsibility.

The EU's eastern *enlargement* has been a main Danish foreign policy objective in the last decade (Fogh Rasmussen, 15/01/2003). The Danish government made reference to the Swedish Presidency term and announced that its Presidency priorities were the three 'Es' – enlargement, enlargement and enlargement. This was seen as one of few tasks where Denmark as a 'federo-sceptic' country was having a front position (cf. Friis, 2003a; Friis, 2003b:49-50).

³² The Russian argument is that as Sakajev is considered a terrorist in Russia, his case should be dealt with by the Russian judicial system, not abroad by foreign authorities (Interviewee 18, 24/09/2003).

For the Danish government, the conclusion of the accession negotiations with up to 10 new member-states during the Presidency term was a top priority at the same time as it was a set task on the Union's agenda, agreed by the Göteborg European Council in June 2001.³³ The Presidency succeeded with this task, much thanks to the rather tough negotiation technique of Danish officials, enabling those countries to become EU members on 1 May 2004.³⁴ The Copenhagen European Council decided on 2007 as the target date for the accession of Bulgaria and Romania, and in 2004, it was to be decided whether Turkey fulfils the criteria for initiating accession negotiations (Copenhagen European Council, 2002:1-2; Fogh Rasmussen & Møller, 21/05/2002).

Another prioritised topic was to strengthen the relations with the EU's new (and old) neighbours, such as Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, and the Union's 'New Neighbours' policy was initiated (see further the discussion below). The promise of a membership perspective, previously given to the countries on the Balkans, was also confirmed (Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002a:6 ff.). The relations to the EU's new neighbours to the east, and the emphasised topics of strengthening the EU-Russia relations and promoting the Northern Dimension were issues directly linked to and integrated in the overall Presidency theme of enlargement (see also Fogh Rasmussen & Møller, 21/05/2002).

As regards the area of *Freedom, Security and Justice*, Denmark wanted to combat the lack of safety and security caused by cross-border crime, such as terrorism, illegal

This perspective gives an explanation to the vivid Russian reactions.

³³ The conclusion of the accession negotiations also had a symbolic value. It was in Copenhagen 1993 that membership first was offered to the candidate countries. A conclusion of the first accession negotiations at the Copenhagen Summit in 2002 would complete the enlargement circle.

³⁴ Fogh Rasmussen even mentioned that an agreement on the enlargement had to take place at the Copenhagen Summit; the meeting would continue as long as was needed.

immigration, trafficking in women, narcotics crime and child pornography on the internet. High priority was given to the implementation of the EU Action Plan to combat international terrorism, and numerous activities were also initiated to strengthening external border controls and to combat illegal immigration and human trafficking, which concur rather well with the new government's policy orientation (Statsministeriet, 26/11/2001. See also Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002b:11-15; Haarder, 05/07/2002; Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002a:11-12).

Increased employment, economic growth and a better environment – *sustainable development* – were top Danish priorities, which also can be seen as general interests of the Danish government (Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002b:5, 16-20; Statsministeriet, 26/11/2001). An agreement was reached to liberalise the EU electricity and gas markets. The Presidency worked actively to secure a final agreement on the tax package, and it promoted environmental cooperation (Danish Government, June 2001:12).

The Presidency stressed *food safety* and animal welfare. The Common Agricultural Policy should be developed in a more market-oriented and green direction and a new Common Fisheries Policy was prepared (Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002b:22-24).

Regarding the EU's *global responsibilities*, the Danish government stressed the fight against international terrorism, extremism and poverty. It highlighted the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the ASEM Summit. Peace initiatives

towards the Middle East were launched, a common EU line on the Iraqi conflict was maintained, and the transatlantic link was strengthened (Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002b:6; Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002a:21-24).

In addition, Denmark intended to support a more democratic and transparent³⁵ Union, and to contribute to the debate on the future of Europe, in which, however, it had a rather low-key approach (Statsministeriet, 26/11/2001).

1.2 Presidency Priorities and Ambitions in the Field of the Northern Dimension

In order to assess the Danish achievements and activities in the promotion of the ND during the Presidency, it is important first to look at the general ambitions of the government as regards both the general relations to Russia and the specific ND priorities, as well as the Danish promoted 'New Neighbours' initiative, to which the ND was connected.

The Baltic Sea region has for a long time played an important role in Danish foreign policy. For security and stability reasons, the government has sought to develop ever-closer relations to all of the countries in the region, both bi- and multilaterally. Since Denmark is the only Nordic country that is both a member in the EU and NATO, it believes it has special responsibilities and has accordingly supported the Baltic States' membership in both organisations (especially in the EU). Denmark believes

its EU policy and Baltic Sea regional policy go hand in hand. The government often stresses that Denmark was behind the creation of the CBSS, which it believes has a fundamental role for the avoidance of new dividing-lines in Europe (Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002c; Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002d:34).

In the Presidency programme, Denmark found it important to expand the EU's cooperation with Russia and to continue with the political dialogue. The Presidency supported the formation of a common European economic area, and Russia's accession to the WTO was given high priority (Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002b:29). The Presidency also attached importance to measures to consolidate democracy, human rights and humanitarian principles – also in Chechnya – as well as the principles of the rule of law in Russia (see also Fogh Rasmussen & Møller, 21/05/2002). This shows how the Danish government is using its Presidency function to promote some common EU values in the relations to Russia.

It is mentioned that “Attempts will also be made to increase cooperation on common challenges concerning energy, the environment, safety in connection with nuclear energy, cross-border crime and the challenges regarding the Kaliningrad exclave” such as the persons and goods transit, energy supplies, and transport. The Danish goal was to find solutions providing the basis for Kaliningrad to participate in the positive development in the Baltic Sea region. The Presidency would further promote Russia's ratification of the Energy Charter, which would be discussed at the planned

³⁵ Danish transparency policy can be seen through its documentation of the bargaining at the Copenhagen Summit, which later was publicly broadcasted.

Summit with President Putin (Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002b:29. See also Council of the European Union, 10983/02, 13/07/2002:6).

The Northern Dimension was mentioned already in the former Government's White Paper in June 2001 as one important task on the coming Presidency agenda (Danish Government, June 2001:10). The government believed that the ND could contribute with progress in a number of fields, such as better framework conditions for private business, active cross-border cooperation, border management, the environment, the fight against organised crime, and a special attention to the situation of Kaliningrad.

The ND is also mentioned in the Presidency programme under the heading 'The EU's Northern Dimension and its new neighbours to the east'. Guidelines and priorities for a new ND Action Plan should be established for the period 2004-2006, with an emphasis on cross-border cooperation, effective border control and the integration of Northwest Russia into the positive developments in the Baltic Sea region. The Action Plan should also support economic development in the region by contributing to better conditions for business and trade.

It was stressed that as the new Action Plan would apply to an enlarged Union with new neighbours (Ukraine, Belarus and eventually Moldova), "it will be natural to see the Northern Dimension as part of a new overall strategy towards the EU's neighbours to the east". An important priority of the Presidency was to promote a coherent policy towards all EU neighbours in the east, in which the ND would be a part. The aim of such an overall strategy would be to secure that the enlargement would not give rise to new dividing-lines in Europe, to strengthen cross-border

cooperation with neighbouring countries and promote their democratic and economic reforms, as well as good neighbourly relations (Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002b:30; Fogh Rasmussen & Møller, 21/05/2002). “The objective is to make the border both secure and effective – a protection against illegal immigration and smuggling – but not a barrier to legal trade and human contacts.” (Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 2002:33).

This Danish aim of strengthening the co-operation with the new neighbours, and perhaps especially as regards illegal immigration goes hand in hand with the government’s national ambition (found in the Government Platform from November 2001) to reduce the number of immigrants to Denmark, and to fight illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings (Statsministeriet, 26/11/2001). Hence, Denmark is trying to export its own values and policies to both other EU members, but also to neighbouring countries through this promotion of a new policy towards EU’s new neighbours (Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 2002b:33).

On a Danish initiative, the Commission would submit a communication on the relations with the new neighbours in October. This communication was, however, not presented until March 2003. One of the main aims of the Presidency as regards the ND was to integrate it into a more comprehensive policy approach towards all the EU’s post-enlargement new neighbours.

A ministerial conference would further be held in Greenland in August, with a focus on the Arctic aspects of the ND (Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002b:30; Haarder, 24/04/2002).

1.3 Presidency Achievements in the Northern Dimension Field

All along the Presidency, Denmark addressed the future of the ND process and wanted to secure its continuation. This was seen as especially important as the following Nordic Presidency would not be held until the first half of 2006, if there would be one at all.³⁶

The Danish government had the intention to strengthen the *EU-Russia relations* and to integrate the ND within the '*Wider Europe*' initiative. It chose to give a lot of attention to the *Greenland Conference and the 'Arctic Window'*, and its organised *Third Foreign Ministers' Conference* should draw up *Guidelines for the new Action Plan*. In the assessment of the Presidency achievements in the field of the ND, it is logical to follow these Danish priorities. Other accomplishments are also addressed.

1.3.1 Strengthened EU-Russia Relations and the Region of Kaliningrad

The Cologne European Council in 1999 decided that each Presidency should present a work plan with specific priorities for the implementation of the Common Strategy on Russia during the relevant semester. The Danish Presidency also presented such a plan in which it found that in the area of the ND, "[p]riority should be given to better framework conditions for private business, cross-border co-operation, border management, environment, crime, civil protection and Kaliningrad" (Council of the

³⁶ Finland has shifted Presidency period with Germany in 2006, as Germany did not want to chair the EU when it has its general elections (Interviewee 8, 30/04/2002).

European Union, 10983/02, 13/07/2002:2). The NDEP was seen as important and Denmark encouraged Russia to provide the necessary financial contribution as a prerequisite for the establishment of the Support Fund, which it finally did (Council of the European Union, 10983/02, 13/07/2002:6. See further below).

The government further supported an increased co-ordination between TACIS, PHARE and INTERREG and it wanted to ensure that the MNEPR negotiations would reach a final conclusion. This did not happen during the Danish Presidency term, but not many months after its conclusion. At a meeting in Stockholm in May 2003, the agreement was signed after almost five years of negotiations (Council of the European Union, 10983/02, 13/07/2002:6-7; Danish Presidency, 06/07/2002).

As regards Kaliningrad, the Seville European Council in June 2002 invited the Commission to study the possibilities for an effective and flexible solution of the transit of persons and goods to and from Kaliningrad. Consequently, in September, the Commission presented its 'Communication on Kaliningrad: Transit', which was welcomed by the General Affairs Council (European Commission, MEMO/02/169, 12/07/2002; General Affairs Council, 30/09/2002:6-7). The Communication sets out a package of measures designed to ease the post-enlargement direct transit of people and goods between Kaliningrad and the rest of Russia in compliance with the *acquis*, which should be acceptable to the candidate countries (European Commission, 18/09/2002§1-3).

The package foresees: (1) the provision of a Facilitated Transit Document; (2) assessing the feasibility of non-stop high-speed trains that could provide sufficient

security to visa-free travel; (3) opening discussion on a long-term goal of ultimate visa-free travel between Russia and the EU and (4) making full use of international conventions for simplified transit of goods. The abolition of the visa requirement for Russian citizens was, however, seen as premature, although being a main concern for Russia (European Commission, 18/09/2002. See also Khristenko, 09/04/2001).

The Presidency worked intensely with the question of transit between the Kaliningrad region and the rest of Russia. After long and difficult negotiations led by Denmark, the EU-Russia Summit on 11 November 2002 succeeded in reaching a common understanding on a solution to the problem, and a specific agreement was entered into with clear obligations for both parties (Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002a:22; Fogh Rasmussen, 18/12/2002). The agreement was partly based on the Commission Communication, and in the joint statement from the Summit it is mentioned that the EU will establish by 1 July 2003 a Facilitated Transit Document scheme to apply for the transit of Russian citizens only between Kaliningrad and other parts of Russia by land (EU-Russia Summit, 11/11/2002§5). This agreement also represents some of the implicit rules involved in the ND composite regime.

Due to the tense Danish-Russian relations, the EU-Russia Summit was organised in Brussels instead of Copenhagen. The fact that they managed to reach an agreement on Kaliningrad meant a great success for the Presidency. However, despite the fact that the Summit led to a common text, both Fogh Rasmussen and the Commissioner for Enlargement Günter Verheugen confessed after the meeting that they remained uncertain whether the provisions in the agreement actually would function in practice.

As noticed in Chapter V, the region of Kaliningrad is integrated in the composite character of the Northern Dimension regime. However, it is sometimes treated by the EU as a separate issue. Although belonging to one of its three ND areas in focus, this was to some extent the case during the Swedish Presidency. Also the Danish Presidency treated Kaliningrad in a similar manner. Moreover, Russia is of the opinion that “due to their scope and specific nature, issues related to ensuring sustainable development of the Kaliningrad Oblast in the context of EU enlargement should be dealt with separately, in the framework of the EU-Russia dialogue”, thus not within the ND (Government of the Russian Federation, 14/01/2003:1).

Hence, Kaliningrad is treated by most actors as an important issue-area within the ND, whilst simultaneously being handled by the EU as a separate theme with particular needs coupled to the enlargement outside this very framework. This is also the case with other issue-areas involved in the ND. Environmental protection, the fight against organised crime, business promotion etc. are relevant cooperation areas in the Baltic Sea region, whilst simultaneously being broader cooperation fields not only valid for the ND.

1.3.2 Wider Europe, New Neighbours and the Northern Dimension

During the Presidency, the Danish government stressed that the experiences drawn from the Northern Dimension’s innovative framework for cooperation across the EU’s external borders could be exported to other neighbouring regions. As expressed by Danish Prime Minister Fogh Rasmussen and Minister of Foreign Affairs Møller

(21/05/2002), “We shall make an effort to ensure that our experience gained from co-operation with Russia within the Northern Dimension will be put to use in the Union policy regarding the new neighbours”.

As the ND was considered effective in building a constructive partnership between the EU and neighbouring countries, not least Russia, “the Northern Dimension could become a model for strengthened neighbourly co-operation with other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, notably the Union’s future new neighbours Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova” (Danish Presidency and the European Commission, 12/07/2002:2-5). Reference was here made to the so-called ‘Wider Europe’ initiative, initially a British proposal launched by the General Affairs Council on 15 April 2002 (General Affairs Council, 15/04/2002:10).

Denmark emphasised an enhanced cooperation with the post-enlargement new neighbours of the EU – Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova – in order to prevent the creation of new dividing-lines in Europe and to stimulate a healthy political and economic development in these countries. It further stressed the value of developing a coherent proximity policy “in which also the Northern Dimension will find its natural place.” (Haarder, 24/04/2002).

The ND is not explicitly mentioned in the Presidency conclusions, which many of its ‘supporters’ might criticise. However, it is integrated in the reasoning on the Wider Europe initiative, in accordance with one of the main Danish objectives (Interviewee 15, 02/05/2002). The text on Wider Europe resembles very much the formulation of the ND, which shows that the ND model was seen by Denmark as a frontrunner,

applicable to this broader proximity cooperation. It is, for instance, stated that the enlargement

presents an important opportunity to take forward relations with neighbouring countries based on shared political and economic values. The Union remains determined to avoid new dividing lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the new borders of the Union (Copenhagen European Council, 2002:6).

In addition, the development of cross-border and regional cooperation with and among neighbouring countries was highlighted (Copenhagen European Council, 2002:7). Hence, the characteristic elements of the ND are implicitly mentioned in the Presidency conclusions.

Not only Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova are included as post-enlargement neighbours, but also the southern Mediterranean states. The relations with these countries should be enhanced, "based on a long-term approach promoting democratic and economic reforms, sustainable developments and trade." The Copenhagen European Council welcomed the intention of the Commission and the High Representative to bring forward proposals to develop new initiatives for this purpose. Consequently, in March 2003, the Commission presented its Communication 'Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours', which was welcomed by the General Affairs and External Relations Council (European Commission, 11/03/2003. See further discussion below).

The Danish Presidency ambition to promote the Wider Europe initiative can be seen as a success. The development of relations with these countries should depend on

“their implementation of further reforms and their willingness to respect international commitments and common values on democracy, the rule of law and human rights.” (General Affairs Council, 18/11/2002:I. See also General Affairs and External Relations Council, 18/03/2003:6). This illustrates in concrete terms how the EU is trying to export its common values and norms to neighbouring states.

One can draw the conclusion that Denmark chose to integrate the ND and the relations to Russia in its general approach towards the post-enlargement EU neighbours. This also fitted one of its perhaps most important priorities as regards the ND. Some of the characteristics of the ND regime could thereby be applicable for a broader geographical area that expands beyond the Baltic Sea region and includes all the post-enlargement new (and old) EU neighbours. These elements have met support in the Finnish government (see for instance Lipponen, 16/09/2002; Interviewee 24, 25/11/2003).

As the Danish government stressed the value of the ND cooperation model for other neighbouring regions of the post-enlargement Union, it seems possible to argue that it focused on regime reproduction during its Presidency term. It had as a Presidency ambition and succeeded with reproducing if not the regime in its entirety so at least parts of the ND cooperation model in other regional contexts.

However, this makes the relationship between the ND composite regime and the Wider Europe initiative rather complex. There seems to be two important aspects of the Danish position *vis-à-vis* the ND that have become discernible during the Presidency period. On the one hand, Denmark seems to consider the ND as a natural

part of the Wider Europe initiative. On the other, it emphasises the applicability of the ND model for regional and cross-border cooperation in other regions in the Union's 'proximity policy'. Could the ND subsequently be seen as a composite regime within a broader, more heterogeneous and probably weaker cross-border regime, and is it even possible to consider the Wider Europe initiative as a kind of a regime? (see further the discussion below).

Finally, as the ND is seen as a part of the EU's relations with its neighbours, this strengthens even more its "external-relations identity", as opposed to those who thought the enlargement would give prominence to the internal dimension of the ND (see also Danish Presidency and the European Commission, 12/07/2002:2-3).

1.3.3 Ministerial Conference in Greenland and the Arctic Window

Another Danish priority was to organise a ministerial conference on the Northern Dimension and the 'Arctic Window', strongly encouraged by the Greenland Home Rule Government (Interviewee 22, 07/05/2003). The Conference held in Ilulisaat, Greenland, on 28 August, was co-hosted by the Minister for European Affairs Bertel Haarder and the Greenland Premier Jonathan Motzfeldt. The 15 EU-members, the 7 partner countries, Canada, USA and two Canadian home rule autonomies participated, as well as a number of IFIs, the European Parliament, the Commission, the ESC and the Committee of the regions.

The conclusions of the Conference formed the basis for the work on the new Action Plan and its main aim was to make sure that the opportunities and challenges of the

'High North' and the Arctic would get attention in this. The result from the Conference was warmly welcomed by the Greenland Home Rule Government, which found that Greenlandic interests had become more illuminated than it had hoped for (Interviewee 22, 07/05/2003).

The 'Arctic Window' in the ND was originally a foreign policy initiative introduced by Greenland in 1999.³⁷ The term should be understood as the Arctic parts of the EU and Russia, as well as Greenland. The Arctic Window reflects the wish of the Greenland Home Rule Government that Arctic societies should establish closer ties with the EU and through which Greenland could safeguard its interests in a partnership with the EU. As expressed by Motzfeldt (2001), "[t]he most important overall objective is to translate Greenland's Arctic position between the north of America and the Northern Dimension of the EU into actual influence". Greenland therefore encouraged the Danish government to promote the Arctic Window during its Presidency period.

According to Motzfeldt (2002b), the three most important Greenlandic priorities in relation to the Arctic Window are: the development of trade and industry, telecommunications, and research relevant to Arctic conditions, such as on the environmentally sound exploitation of mineral resources, as well as on cold-resistant materials and building methods. Another concern is the development of human resources, the empowerment of the indigenous people and to maintaining their culture and knowledge. Regional and cross-border cooperation, including the important role of regional organisations, is also stressed in the Arctic Window.

³⁷ The content of the 'Arctic Window' is found in the document 'An Arctic Window in the Northern Dimension' (Greenland Home Rule Government, 2001).

Greenland wants for instance the EU to seek permanent observer status in the Arctic Council. In addition, it is expressed that the EU's relations with the USA and Canada could benefit from the Arctic Window. This shows how the Greenland Home Rule Government tries to influence the content and direction of ND, so that the EU would focus more on the Arctic conditions and concerns (Motzfeldt, 2002d. See also Greenland Home Rule Government, 2001:2-5). Indeed, at the Conference, Greenland invited the EU to "initiate a coherent horizontal Arctic policy", integrating a consideration of Arctic issues and interests in the preparation and implementation of all relevant policies (Motzfeldt, 2002b).³⁸

The Conference recognised the wish of Arctic societies, including indigenous peoples to establish closer ties with the EU on a number of areas falling under the Arctic Window. As the Arctic region is characterised by harsh climate, sparse population, vast territories, long distances, rich natural resources, sensitive natural environments with vulnerable ecosystems and cold winters, Greenland was seen by the participants as optimally positioned to support EU research priorities in particular as regards global climate change, environment and pollution, and natural resources (Danish Presidency, 30/08/2002; Danish Presidency, 29/08/2002; Greenland Home Rule Government, 2001:3).

Hence, one important priority of the Danish Presidency was the Arctic Window of the ND. Denmark wanted to draw attention to Arctic issues during its Presidency term, and as these are similar in both the Arctic parts of Russia and in Greenland, one found it useful to convene the Conference in Greenland. Whilst the main interest of

³⁸ According to Motzfeldt (2001), this would mean that the EU regularly would deal with Arctic challenges, which in turn should bring about a better chance that the EU would support Greenland's

Greenland in relation to the Conference was to focus on its particular concerns, the Danish government emphasised the Arctic regions of Russia. Denmark took the opportunity to filling the Arctic Window with more concrete content, which was widely encouraged by the Greenland Home Rule Government (Interviewee 22, 24/02/2003; Interviewee 16, 06/05/2003).

The Danish strategy to focus on the Arctic regions also had some effects on the external support of the ND as such. Both Canada and the USA participated at the Conference and underlined their shared interests in this part of the world. The ND became strengthened in the transatlantic relations.

1.3.4 The Third Foreign Ministers' Conference and Guidelines for a New Action Plan

One of the main tasks of the Danish Presidency was to establish guidelines for the new Action Plan of the ND, which should come into force on the expiry of the first Action Plan in January 2004. Consequently, the Presidency organised a Third Foreign Ministers' Conference on the Northern Dimension on 21 October, chaired by the Danish Minister for European Affairs Bertel Haarder. The foreign ministers of the 15 member-states and the 7 partner countries, together with representatives from the Commission and the European Parliament and observers from the IFIs participated.³⁹

viewpoints, for instance in relation to the USA.

³⁹ Through organising the Conference in connection to a General Affairs Council meeting and the European Conference, most ministers, both from member-states and partner countries participated.

The Danish intention to organise the Conference was already established at the Göteborg European Council, and it was seen as a follow-up to the Conference on the Arctic Window in August 2002 (Swedish Presidency Conclusions, 2001§64). The main aim was to review the 'Guidelines for the new Action Plan'. This document, endorsed by the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 22 October 2002, was adopted at the Copenhagen European Council in December 2002. It provides all actors involved a guiding framework regarding principles, general objectives and priorities, indicating certain specific priority themes which partners should take forward for the further ND cooperation.

The Conference marked the beginning of the work on the new Action Plan, which would be developed by the Commission in close cooperation with the member-states, the partner countries, regional and local authorities, regional organisations, business world and civil society. A consolidated draft was subsequently presented during the following Greek Presidency, which ensured the continuity of the ND process. The implementation of the new Action Plan would coincide with the EU enlargement (Møller, 2003:1).

In July 2002, the Danish Presidency and the Commission presented a joint text on 'The Northern Dimension after Enlargement'. In this, they believed that the first Action Plan was too project oriented, providing a list of individual projects instead of emphasising the underlying objectives and priorities of the ND. The new Action Plan would benefit from concentrating more on clear strategic objectives, goals and priorities within each of the key issue-areas of the ND, as well as providing an indication of the mechanisms for co-ordination between all the partners concerned,

and of appropriate monitoring and review arrangements. This would help ensure that key priorities could be given the necessary attention (Danish Presidency and the European Commission, 12/07/2002:2-3).

They argued that the new Action Plan should reflect the need for a certain “reshaping of objectives, priorities and activities” of the ND as a consequence of the enlargement (Danish Presidency and the European Commission, 12/07/2002:6-7). This can be seen as an attempt to transform the ND regime, beginning with the new Action Plan in 2004, which would be based on the new circumstances introduced by the enlargement (see further discussion below).

In the Conclusions of the Chair, the ND is defined by Denmark as a “forum for continuous dialogue on priorities and for co-ordination and co-operation. The approach is broad and horizontal.” (Danish Presidency, 21/10/2002§2.2). ‘Dialogue’ and ‘cooperation’ can be seen as Danish key words, and Denmark underlined that the ND should be seen as a ‘process’. Haarder considered the ND as a “framework for the development of common priorities and goals and for reaching agreement on joint activities.” (Danish Presidency, 21/10/2002).

As regards the method of work, it is mentioned that

[a]n appropriate division of responsibility should be agreed for the implementation of the new Action Plan among all relevant actors including EU Member States and partner countries, regional bodies, local governments, the business community and civil society, academia and the scientific community. (Danish Presidency, 21/10/2002§3.3).

An “effective division of labour and co-ordination among the existing organisations” such as the CBSS, the BEAC, the AC and the NCM was seen as important. Here, Denmark managed to place the Nordic Council of Ministers at the same level as the other three organisations. These bodies were further given greater responsibility under the new Action Plan.

This attempt to establish a division of labour between the actors (organisations) involved in the ND, can be related to the text produced by the Presidency and the Commission in July 2002. In this, it is stressed that the three areas of environment including nuclear safety, cross-border co-operation and JHA, would continue to be the primary focus of the Commission. Simultaneously, other partners should take a more active lead in the other areas covered by the Action Plan (energy and infrastructure, public health, trade and business co-operation, education and research). Thus, different partners should be responsible for the implementation of selected parts of the new Action Plan (Danish Presidency and the European Commission, 12/07/2002:2-3).

The Presidency stressed (together with the Commission) that it could be useful to tighten up the focus of the ND, emphasising a restricted number of key themes and priorities, and concentrating on a smaller range of primary activities within each of these key themes, with focus on deliverable results. The Danish government drew attention to the improvement of the business climate (to increase trade and investments), cooperation within the areas of energy, transport and communication, and cooperation within the fields of research, health and the environment, including nuclear safety (Danish Presidency, 21/10/2002). Denmark wanted to keep the focus

in the ND on a limited number of issue-areas (Danish Presidency and the European Commission, 12/07/2002:2-3; Interviewee 15, 02/05/2002). This approach was challenged by the Finns who did not want to see a narrowed scope of the second Action Plan (see Lipponen, 16/09/2002).

Sustainable development was emphasised by Denmark as perhaps the most important principle of the ND regime, and in order to promote this, the Conference stressed the need to undertake actions in the following priority fields:

- *Economy, business promotion and infrastructure*: business promotion, especially in Russia, became a new priority for the ND, added by Denmark.
- *Human resources, education, scientific research and health*.
- *Environment, nuclear safety and natural resources*: this belongs to the old priorities of the ND.
- *Cross-border co-operation and regional development*: focus on the EU-Russia border has become a new priority for the ND, much promoted by Denmark. Regional development concerns border regions (Møller, 2003:1);
- *JHA*: the fight against organised crime is also an old ND priority (Groenbjerg, 07/12/2002:2-3).

Two cross-cutting themes that needed special attention in the Action Plan were also illuminated, namely Kaliningrad and the Arctic region. Kaliningrad had been a priority before – one among the three Feira themes in focus – but the Arctic region, with accent on the ‘High North’ of Russia, gained greater emphasis in the ND during the Danish Presidency (Danish Presidency, 21/10/2002).

The focus of the Conference was through the launch of the new Action Plan on the decision-making procedures and the implementation of the ND regime. The continuity of the ND process was thereby ensured.

Finally, it is important to notice that a couple of months after the Conference, the Russian delegation declared that it limited its participation to observer, did not take part in the approval of the Guidelines, thus considering not being bound by this document, and believing the document being an inappropriate basis for participation in the activity areas covered by the ND (Council of the Baltic Sea States, CSO Special Session, 6-7 March 2003; Government of the Russian Federation, 14/01/2003:2-3). Russia based its decision on the fact that the Danish Presidency “chose not to take into account Russia’s views and priorities regarding the Northern Dimension” in the preparations of the Conference (Government of the Russian Federation, 14/01/2003:2). However, as Russia did not say anything about this during the Conference, but waited some time, one might suspect that the determining factor behind the decision was the general development of the Denmark-Russia relations, which after the Conference became rather tense because of the Chechen World Congress in Copenhagen and the case of Sakajev (Interviewee 16, 06/05/2003).

The Russian behaviour has implications for the effectiveness of the ND composite regime. In order to be efficient, it is important that the main actors support its principles, norms and procedures. If this is not the case, the ND could eventually be transformed into a ‘paper-regime’ (see Chapter III). In this case, Russia seemed to downplay the importance of active participation at one of the most important

decision-making structures of the ND. Hence, the tense Denmark-Russia relations affected the credibility of the composite regime.

1.3.5 A Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing

In September, a 'Forum on the Northern Dimension in Social Protection and Health', was held in Joensuu, Finland. At this, the Finnish Prime Minister Lipponen (16/09/2002) argued that the NDEP could provide "a useful model in combating diseases and other threats to our health". Earlier in 2002, the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health assigned the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health the task of examining the best way to enhance international cooperation in health and social protection within the framework of the ND. It proposed the establishment of a 'Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing' (NDPPS). A temporary international working-group was accordingly set up to further develop the initiative.

The Third Ministers' Conference noted that "there is a need to consider the establishment of a Northern Dimension partnership to support concerted joint actions to overcome the serious health and social problems in the area", which should be based on long-term sustained commitment by equal partners (Danish Presidency, 21/10/2002§4.2). Such a partnership was actively supported by Russia (Government of the Russian Federation, 14/01/2003:2). Lipponen hoped his presented initiative would be included in the second Action Plan (Lipponen, 16/09/2002). Indeed, in this it is stated that the establishment of the NDPPS should address common problems

such as communicable diseases (especially tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS) in Northwest Russia and the acceding countries, as well as problems related to general health and social wellbeing (European Commission, 10/06/2003:8-9).

The process that started on a Finnish initiative during the Danish Presidency culminated in October 2003 with the formal establishment of the NDPPS at a meeting in Oslo of Ministers of Health and Social Affairs and other High representatives of the founding partners.⁴⁰ These partners were the five Nordic countries, the three Baltic States, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Spain, the European Commission, the World Health Organisation, the BEAC, the CBSS, the International Labour Organisation, the International Organisation for Migration, the NCM and the Joint United Nations Programme against HIV/AIDS (Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing, 27/10/2003). The partner scope is thus broader than the geographical focus of the ND.

The NDPPS is seen as a suitable framework for addressing the serious challenges posed by the rapid spread of communicable diseases and the large number of lifestyle-related diseases, particularly in Northwest Russia. Its main objective is to promote sustainable development through improving human health and social wellbeing. This would be done through intensified cooperation and assistance to needed partners in improving their capacity-building in this sector (Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing, 27/10/2003§1). The latter element can be coupled to the discussion in Chapter III, paragraph 4.1.2, in

⁴⁰ Already at the Joensuu Conference in 2002, Norway promised to host a concluding conference on the matter within a year's time.

which it is mentioned that in order to make progress as regards the implementation of the regime, it may be more effective for stronger actors to assist weaker ones in for instance their capacity-building, rather than threatening or sanctioning them to comply with the common principles and norms.

Two priority areas were identified for improved cooperation and coordination: (1) reduction of major communicable diseases and prevention of life-style related non-communicable diseases, and (2) enhancement and promotion of healthy and socially rewarding lifestyles. The structure of the NDPPS would be the following:

- Partnership Annual Conferences would constitute the highest cooperation structure, which should formulate overall policy orientations.
- A Committee of Senior Representatives (CSR) would be the regular coordination mechanism.
- A Partnership secretarial function could be established when considered necessary.
- Expert Groups could be established by the CSR in order to carry out its tasks.
- A chair of the Partnership was established, held by Sweden the first two years.

The NDPPS also describes the financing mechanisms of joint activities, through national, bilateral or multilateral financing, which are comparable to the ones within the NeDAP. In addition, much influenced by the character of the NDEP and its Support Fund, multilateral financing through the potential establishment of a voluntary Partnership Fund in 2004 was considered, to be managed by an IFI (Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing, 27/10/2003§6). The NDPPS was seen as “one of the key elements of the second Action Plan for the Northern Dimension” (Bondevik, 27/10/2003).

The establishment of a NDPPS, can be seen as constituting the foundations for a 'sub-regime' within the broader ND composite regime, which has many elements in common with the NDEP, not least its partnership model (see also Vanhanen, 27/10/2003). However, it addresses another issue-area and other sets of cross-border problems in the region.

It sets out common principles and values, among which the ones in focus are sustainable development and the importance of addressing soft-security challenges; the same as within the NDEP. It defines the issue-area at hand, and identifies common challenges that need joint action and cooperation. It even includes some decision-making procedures and financial mechanisms for the making and implementation of the Partnership, similar to the NDEP and the NeDAP. Finally, it is explicitly stated that it should not be seen as an international organisation, and does not constitute a legal person under international law (see Bondevik, 27/10/2003; Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing, 27/10/2003). The NDPPS is very similar to the characteristics of the NDEP and also has many elements in common with the NeDAP, not least its decision-making procedures and financial mechanisms (see further the discussion in Chapter VII).

Moreover, as we have seen in Chapter III, paragraph 1, in a 'composite policy', one may distinguish between the macro and the meso levels of policy. The sub-regime or meso policy dimension included in the NDPPS can also be seen through the fact that sectoral ministers met at its founding conference.

1.3.6 Other Meetings and Conferences

During the Danish Presidency, a number of meetings (approximately 180) and conferences were held in relation to the ND and the Baltic Sea cooperation at various locations. In addition to those already mentioned, there was in September a Conference in Riga and Ventspils on 'Safety and Security of Energy Supplies in the Baltic Sea region in the light of the EU enlargement', and a conference on 'The Baltic Sea region 2010: Encountering the Past – Mapping the Future', in Copenhagen. In October, there was the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (annual meeting) in St Petersburg, the Baltic Sea Conference in Copenhagen under the title 'Baltic Metropolises' and the third Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Inari (Finland). In November, there was a Conference on Energy Supply and Demand in the Kaliningrad Region. Finally, in December, a Ministerial Conference on the Baltic Sea Regional Energy Co-operation was held in Vilnius.

Despite the fact that not all of them had the ND as an explicit theme, these meetings and conferences can still be seen as promoting various elements of the composite regime. Together, they contribute to the strengthening of the Baltic Sea regional cooperation among many of the participants within the ND, and all work under the overall ambition to strengthen security, stability and sustainable development in the region. The regime values of the ND regime can here be seen as being stressed also outside the realm of the particular regime. Moreover, many of the conferences held on the ND or the Baltic Sea region cooperation can indirectly, although not explicitly, be seen as a part of the decision-making procedures within the ND

composite regime, i.e., measures and initiatives that together contribute to the development and implementation of the goals of the regime.

One important conference held in Brussels in July, which clearly can be seen as part of the decision-making procedures and rules within the ND regime, was the *pledging conference for the NDEP Support Fund*. At this, international donors met to raise funds to tackle the legacy of nuclear waste and environmental threats in the ND area, with focus on Northwest Russia. The conference launched the NDEP Support Fund, and it was co-chaired by the Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of the Russian Federation Alexei Kudrin and the President of the EBRD Jean Lemierre (European Commission, 26/11/2002:18).

The Göteborg European Council requested the Commission, in co-operation with the EBRD, to organise a pledging conference for the NDEP Support Fund, and in December 2001, the EBRD agreed upon the rules of the NDEP Support Fund (see EBRD, 2001). The Support Fund was finally launched through this pledging conference in July 2002, and its main aim was to strengthen the effect of the NDEP by mobilising grant funds to leverage loans from IFIs as well as local resources for environmental investments.

The launch of the Support Fund was conditional on 100 million Euros being raised, which was met as the Commission, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia and Sweden announced initial contributions totalling 110 million Euros (European Commission, IP/02/994, 04/07/2002). Its successful launch meant that the

financing and co-ordination approach used in the NDEP is stated in the new Action Plan as a useful model for other important sectors in the ND. This can be seen in very concrete terms through the NDPPS (European Commission, 10/06/2003:3).

Another important event during the Presidency was the second *Northern Dimension Business Forum* on 14 October 2002, which also can be seen as constituting an official part of the decision-making procedures of the composite regime. This forum, together with the one organised during the Swedish Presidency are further considered useful models to use for the implementation of the ND in the new Action Plan (European Commission, 10/06/2003:16). The forum was organised by the *Baltic Development Forum* in cooperation with the Danish Presidency within the framework of the 4th annual Baltic Development Forum Summit in Copenhagen. It was chaired by Uffe Elleman-Jensen, Chairman of the Baltic Development Forum and former Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, and its conclusions were presented at the Third Foreign Ministers' Conference the same month.

The Forum was of the opinion that the ND Action Plan should prioritise efforts to promote good governance and building a modern legal framework (with focus on Russia), which in turn would create a good business climate for private business and thus encourage increased trade and investments. It recommended that the new Action Plan should strengthen the ties between the enlarged EU and Russia through a number of initiatives, such as investment promotion in various sectors and secure investment financing (Danish Presidency, 24/10/2002). At the Baltic Development Forum, there was a general interest in ensuring that the major Russian centres

bordering the Baltic Sea, St Petersburg and Kaliningrad, would become involved in the increasingly integrated Baltic economic system (Fogh Rasmussen, 13/10/2002).

Other meetings during the Presidency were those with *Canada*. At the EU-Canada Summit in June 2001 held in Stockholm, the first progress report on cooperation on Northern issues was presented. A second report was presented at the EU-Canada Summit in Ottawa, December 2002 (European Commission, 26/11/2002:6). There was also an EU-Canada Ministerial meeting in October. The ND was one of the topics on the agenda, and the two parties stressed common challenges in their Northern and Arctic regions, such as environmental threats, long distances, harsh climate, and weak infrastructure. They also underlined common opportunities in the area of research (Danish Presidency, 03/10/2002; Danish Presidency, 19/12/2002).

2. ANALYSING THE DANISH PRESIDENCY

The first section of this analysis deals with the possibilities of the Danish Presidency to influence the EU's foreign policy agenda in the field of the ND. The limitations involved as regards this influence and the Presidency's room of manoeuvre are assessed. In the second part, the Danish position *vis-à-vis* issue-areas and the elements in the Northern Dimension regime are examined. In the third part, the phase of the regime development process in which the Danish Presidency was active, and how its activities in the field of the ND can be characterised, are looked at.

2.1 Presidency Functions and the Northern Dimension

2.1.1 Administration, Management and Co-ordination

As previously written, it is important that the actual government performs efficiently in order to handle the Presidency function of administration and management well. The Danish Presidency was seen by most observers as well prepared, result-oriented and efficient, much thanks to its successful enlargement portfolio (see for instance Larsson, 2002). This was the case despite the fact that Denmark belongs to the group of smaller member-states and being geographically situated at the periphery of the EU.

Moreover, as Denmark chaired the Union for the sixth time, it had previous experience of the EU Presidency. This experience should, however, not be too exaggerated, as there is a time-lap between each Presidency situation for all member-states. Denmark's extensive relations with the supranational institutions and its successful coordination of information between Copenhagen, Brussels and the other EU capitals, also contributed to its perceived efficiency.

The domestic situation in Denmark was stable at the time for the Presidency and the central administration was in general perceived as well-functioning. However, Denmark had a relatively new government and its rather extensive cooperation with the far right party – the Danish People's Party – was criticised by some of the member-states. Yet, Prime Minister Fogh Rasmussen enjoyed a strong domestic position.

As previously mentioned, Denmark is considered a comparatively 'federo-sceptic' member-state, perhaps especially as it has several 'opt-outs' from the general integration process, and as it frequently organises referenda on new treaties. The 'opt-outs' indeed affected its leadership potential in these particular fields, which is rather logical as Greece was given responsibility for these areas.⁴¹ The Danish government believed that its possibilities to influence the EU's agenda were restricted in the 'opt-out' areas, and announced at the end of the Presidency term that they ought to be abolished, with a basis in a supportive referendum.

Denmark had the opportunity to emphasise and illuminate issues related to the ND as it prepared, organised and chaired all the meetings in the Council machinery and wrote the conclusions of both the conference in Greenland and the Third Foreign Ministers' Conference, including the Guidelines for the new Action Plan, as well as the Presidency conclusions.

The main theme of the Presidency concurred with its primary national EU priority; to incorporate Central and Eastern European countries, including the Baltic States, into the EU. The enlargement represents one of Denmark's most important foreign policy objectives, which also will modify Denmark's geographical position to a more centrist one (cf. Mouritzen, 2003). The enlargement was also a set task on the Union's agenda, which Denmark took full advantage of. Denmark succeeded well with this task, much thanks to its diplomatic skills, its rather result-oriented strategy

⁴¹ Yet, Denmark contributed to progress also in the 'opt-out' areas; most notably in the field of JHA where it succeeded in reaching an EU agreement on Dublin II (Friis, 2003).

and its stress on consensus-building. This also shows that small states are as capable as larger ones to lead an efficient Presidency term (cf. Miles, 2003b).

2.1.2 Policy Initiation and Agenda-Shaping

The Danish government took advantage of the Presidency function of agenda-shaping by focusing on one major theme, namely the enlargement. However, as this was a set task on the EU's agenda and as Denmark also contributed to progress in other domains, it avoided criticism from the other member-states (cf. Friis, 2003a). The Presidency seemed to balance its role as a 'leader' with that of a 'mediator'.

As the enlargement was the one task on the Danish agenda, also the ND and the general EU-Russia relations were integrated in this field, in relation to the Union's post-enlargement relations to its 'new' neighbours (the Wider Europe initiative). The main focus on the enlargement could also explain to some extent why Denmark chose to integrate the ND within a wider neighbourhood context, that it was not given a more pronounced position in the Presidency programme, and that it was not explicitly mentioned in the Presidency conclusions, even if the formulation of the Wider Europe initiative resembles very much the characteristics of the ND.

In its function as agenda-shaper, Denmark included the ND and its particular priorities on the agenda of various Council formations and at international conferences. As Denmark has rather extensive relations with both the Nordic and Baltic states, has a pronounced interest in the enlargement process towards not least the Baltic states, and as it was one of the initiators behind the CBSS, it was more or

less expected by the other member-states, in particular the other Nordic countries, that the Danish government would show some *leadership* towards the Northern parts of Europe.

Denmark succeeded in drawing attention to its perceived priorities in relation to the ND in a large number of discussions, both within the Council machinery as well as at international forums. One example of this was the conference on the Arctic Window, a particular Danish interest, which was prepared by the Danish government in cooperation with the Greenland Home Rule Government. The Arctic region gained a strengthened position within the new Action Plan. Cross-border cooperation and business promotion were other prioritised topics that received increased attention in the new Action Plan, at least partly thanks to Danish efforts. This can be seen as an example of *agenda-structuring*.

The Danish Presidency decided to shape and illuminate various aspects of the ND, and presented it somewhat differently from Finland and Sweden. Both in speeches and documents, the ND was described as a natural and integral part of the EU's developing proximity policy towards its nearest post-enlargement neighbours and as being a useful cooperation framework for this. The rationale behind this approach was to ensure that the ND would remain on the Union's foreign policy agenda also after the Danish Presidency term. The continuity of the ND process was seen as crucial. The Danish focus on the Wider Europe initiative can also in a sense be seen as *agenda-setting* as the Copenhagen European Council for the first time confirmed the new proximity policy as part of the EU's political agenda. In addition, Denmark stressed the importance of a slight change in the orientation of the ND so that it

would fit post-enlargement Europe. Denmark succeeded with its strategy. The orientation of the ND was indeed modified in the new Action Plan and it was also mentioned in the Commission's communications on Wider Europe, although rather briefly (see further below).

Denmark also focused on the implementation of the ND and prepared the ground for the new Action Plan; a task delegated to it by previous EU decisions. The Action Plan was indeed presented by the Commission in June 2003, and it followed the Guidelines established at the Third Foreign Ministers' Conference. As this covered the years 2004-2006, it ensured the continuity of the ND process; a central Danish objective.

There were also some *limitations* involved as regards the possibilities for the Presidency to influence the EU's external agenda. Some issues were determined prior to the Danish Presidency term, which narrowed its room of manoeuvre. The NDEP Support Fund Pledging Conference, for instance, only happened to take place during the Presidency. The Göteborg European Council had already decided that it would be organised by the Commission and the EBRD. The Commission's Communication on 'Kaliningrad: Transit' also happened to be presented during the Danish Presidency, which influenced the Council discussions on the Kaliningrad region. The agreement concluded with Russia in November was for instance partly based on the Communication. As for the Finnish Presidency, also Denmark was given the task by previous EU decisions to prepare the ground for an Action Plan through producing the 'Guidelines for a New Action Plan' at the Third Foreign

Ministers' Conference. Denmark announced its intention to organise this conference already at the Göteborg European Council.

Moreover, some external events influenced the outcome of the Presidency in the field of the ND. The most important factor in this context was the Denmark-Russia relations. The deterioration of these relations resulted in Russia's withdrawal from participating as an equal partner after the Third Foreign Ministers' Conference. This was also added to the Conclusions of the Chair, but only some time after the Conference. The EU-Russia Summit was also for this reason convened in Brussels instead of Copenhagen.

Consequently, the Denmark-Russia relations at the time affected the ND, although not being an explicit intention by either of the parties. In order for an international regime to function properly, it is vital that the most important partner country participates fully. As Russia decided only to participate as an observer and not to adopt the Conclusions of the Chair at one of the most important decision-making mechanisms of the ND, this weakens the regime.

2.1.3 Mediation and Consensus-Building

Throughout the Presidency, consensus-building was an emphasised concept. This is also visible in the Danish governmental relations to the Greenland Home Rule Government *vis-à-vis* the Greenland conference and the attention paid to the Arctic Window. Yet, in negotiations that threatened to affect its strongest national priorities,

such as the enlargement process, Denmark had a tougher negotiation style and underlined the importance of keeping the timeframe.

As the Presidency prepares the basis for conference and meeting discussions, it has the opportunity to emphasise issues it has particular interest in. The conclusions of the chair from the conferences Denmark organised and the Presidency conclusions are compromise texts prepared by the Presidency, which are based on the negotiations, individual contributions and position papers of the participants. There is for instance a clear linkage between Danish interests in the ND field, the ‘Guidelines for a New Action Plan’, and the final Action Plan prepared by the Commission. As most of the participants were happy with the Guidelines – with the important exception of Russia – the Commission did not divert a lot from this document when preparing the new Action Plan.

2.1.4 Representation

Denmark also took advantage of the Presidency’s representation function. The Greenland conference shows how the Danish Presidency represented the EU’s external relations towards for instance the USA and Canada, which besides the ND partners also participated. In its relations with certain third countries (for instance the meetings with Canada) and IFIs, it represented the Union’s approach and its own concerns in relation to the ND.

Throughout the Presidency, a great number of international meetings and conferences were held in relation to the ND, which together contributed to increased attention being paid to the Baltic Sea region.

2.2 Emphasised Issue-Areas and Regime Components

2.2.1 Promoted Principles, Norms and Issue-Areas

Denmark seemed to give priority to a limited number of *issue-areas* during its Presidency period. It emphasised that it could be useful to streamline the focus of the ND to a limited number of priorities, themes, and activities within each of the themes. Hence, the Danish strategy can be seen as opposite to the Finnish one of keeping a broad, horizontal approach. With a narrow focus, the composite character of the ND can in a sense be seen as being weakened.

The *geographical focus* during the Presidency term was in particular Northwest Russia, the Arctic region and the region of Kaliningrad. The EU-Russia relations were a top priority. The Kaliningrad region and in particular the issue of transit was given attention throughout the Presidency term, and Denmark contributed to the EU-Russia agreement on the matter in November. Kaliningrad was further singled out as one of two important geographical areas that needed special attention in the new Action Plan. Hence, the harsh Russian critique of the Danish government as regards the Chechen Congress and the case of Sakajev did not seem to harm progress in the overall EU-Russia relations.

The Arctic region was also given attention, and transatlantic cooperation was stressed in this area. However, whilst north-east Russia might be of interest for North America, its north-western region is the focus of the EU. It is easy to assume that the Arctic Window (and thereby Greenland) was a highly promoted area by the Danish government due to the scheduled conference on the matter in August. This area seemed, however, to be more a priority of Greenland, which succeeded in influencing the Danish government to organising such a conference during its Presidency term.

It is logical to see why the Greenland Home Rule Government promoted a Conference on the Arctic Window during the Presidency. Through the Conference, attention was directed towards the particular concerns and challenges in this region. This would also, in the view of Greenland, result in an increase in the EU's interests in this part of the world, and perhaps also in a certain transfer of Community resources. Thus, it is important to note that the Greenlandic views are different from those of the Danish government. Whilst the Danish government stressed the Arctic regions as such, Greenland emphasised its own particular concerns (Interviewee 5, 24/02/2003).

It was in Denmark's interest that the Arctic region should be emphasised at the Greenland conference and in the new Action Plan. Indeed, this was also the case. In the new Action Plan, the Arctic region, together with the region of Kaliningrad, is the geographical focal point. Hence, the geographical focus during the Presidency was mainly on Russia; in particular the border districts of Kaliningrad and its Arctic

region (Interviewee 5, 24/02/2003). This Danish limitation of the ND can be seen as justified by the fact that the new Action Plan would be implemented along with the accomplishment of the enlargement. The plan should thus focus on issues that arise as a result of enlargement.

Prioritised issue-areas during the Presidency were the improvement of the business climate, economy and infrastructure; cooperation within the areas of energy, transport and communication; and cooperation within the fields of research, education, human resources and health; as well as cross-border cooperation and regional development. These areas were also included in the ND Guidelines, besides the three in the Feira Action Plan. In particular the development of small and medium sized enterprises – business promotion – was given attention (Interviewee 16, 06/05/2003). This latter sector has much thanks to Danish efforts become a new prioritised sector within the new Action Plan.

The Danish Presidency drew attention to the principles, objectives and priorities involved in the Northern Dimension regime. In order to adapt the ND to the enlargement, it stressed that there was a need for a certain reshaping of these elements. The most important *principle* in the ND regime highlighted by Denmark was sustainable development. This also belonged to one of its general Presidency priorities. An action that would gain increased attention in the new Action Plan as a result of the enlargement was the EU-Russia dialogue, much emphasised by Denmark. Other *values* of the ND that Denmark emphasised was that it should be seen as a ‘process’ and a framework concept for ‘political dialogue’, for ‘co-ordination’ and ‘co-operation’. The term ‘process’ can be characterised by the

developing character of the ND and the introduced changes to the regime as a consequence of the enlargement (see further the discussion below).

In addition, Denmark stressed its perceived speciality on borders and experiences of cross-border cooperation. Cross-border cooperation is seen as a key element and perhaps one of the most important values, both in the context of the ND and the Wider Europe initiative. Denmark feels it has a lot of experience of this from the Danish-German border region, which it can share with others, in particular with the Baltic States and Russia (Interviewee 5, 24/02/2003). This can be seen as a central principle in the ND regime that the Danes decided to emphasise.

Denmark highlighted the general regime *norms* involved, such as the equal status of the partner countries. It gave special weight to the role and rights of regional organisations and suggested a concrete model for a division of labour between them and the Commission. Although describing the ND as a horizontal approach, in practical terms, the Danes seemed to give less emphasis to the horizontal dimension than the Finns, by whom it was more or less seen as a norm.

2.2.2 Decision-Making Procedures and Rules in Focus

The Danish stress on regime *procedures* can be seen all along the Presidency term. In particular the 'Guidelines for a New Action Plan' includes important procedures for the making and implementation of the ND regime. It does not only focus on the principles, general objectives and priorities for the post-enlargement ND, but also

draws attention to having adequate mechanisms for co-ordination between the partners concerned, and of appropriate monitoring and review arrangements.

It lists a number of mechanisms which together would contribute to a more efficient implementation of joint projects. These mechanisms, which also are included in the second Action Plan, would facilitate the concrete implementation of joint projects (see further below). Hence, the focus of the Third Foreign Ministers' Conference was clearly on the decision-making procedures and the implementation of the ND regime. Also the organising of the Greenland conference on the Arctic Window can be seen as a concrete Danish initiative to develop the procedures of the ND regime. In contrast to the Finnish and Swedish presidencies, Denmark chose to organise two ministerial conferences in the framework of the ND.

As noticed, Denmark emphasised how a concrete division of labour could look like among the regional organisations involved, which would make the implementation of the ND more efficient. This represents some of the Danish promoted ND procedures involved. The three highlighted Feira issue-areas would remain the focus and task of the Commission. The other regional organisations would be in charge of implementation in other areas such as energy and infrastructure, public health, trade and business co-operation, education and research. Consequently, the division of labour, which was a promoted topic during the Swedish Presidency, became further concretised during the Danish Presidency. It is important to note, however, that this particular division of labour was proposed in the joint document prepared by the Commission and the Presidency in July 2002. Yet, the idea was not included in the new Action Plan.

Regional organisations were in general seen as very important, and Denmark succeeded in placing the NCM on the same level as the CBSS, the BEAC and the AC. The NCM is even seen by some Danish officials as perhaps the most important regional organisation involved in the ND (Interviewee 5, 24/02/2003).

The successful Pledging Conference for the launch of the NDEP Support Fund was also an important aspect of the intergovernmental decision-making procedures of the Northern Dimension regime, as this contributes to its concrete making, implementation and financing. Its success also meant that in the Wider Europe initiative, the NDEP was seen as a successful model for cooperation, which could be applied and reproduced in other regional contexts in the EU's neighbourhood.

The initial steps taken during the Presidency as regards the establishment of the NDPPS, can be seen as introducing new decision-making procedures within the ND composite regime with focus on one of the issue-areas involved. These procedures are also of a more intergovernmental character.

The government further supported an increased co-ordination between TACIS, PHARE and INTERREG and it wanted to ensure that the MNEPR negotiations would reach a final conclusion. These are other examples of the Danish emphasis on the regime procedures within the ND.

As regards the regime *rules*, the Danish supported EU-Russia agreement on the question of transit in relation to the Kaliningrad region includes clear obligations for

both parties. It can therefore be seen as some of the implicit rules involved in the Northern Dimension regime. These rules are not directly associated with the ND initiative as such, but are clearly related to one of its issue-areas in focus.

The NDEP Support Fund, launched during the Danish Presidency, represents some of the more explicit regime rules involved. The specific rules of the fund were established by the Board of Directors of the EBRD. Also the promoted MNEPR agreement characterises, as we have seen in Chapter V, some of the implicit rules involved in the Northern Dimension regime. These rules became strengthened not many months after the end of the Presidency as the agreement was concluded.

2.3 Phase in the Regime Development Process

2.3.1 Implementation of the Northern Dimension Regime and the Second Action Plan

A central focus of the Danish Presidency was on the concrete implementation of the Northern Dimension. This explains the Danish attention given to the decision-making procedures of the ND regime. The main priority of the Presidency – a task which also had been given to it by previous EU decisions – was to establish Guidelines for the new Action Plan. As the Action Plan is the main document for the implementation of the ND and for making it more concrete, Denmark gave attention to the implementation phase of the regime development process. This Danish focus can be explained by the development of the ND regime. It had already been decided

at the formulation of the first Action Plan that after its ending in 2003, a new one should be considered. The Danish Presidency happened to take place when the new Action Plan should be prepared. However, it is not only the timing of the Danish Presidency that explains this focus. The preparations of the new Action Plan were also in Denmark's interests. Denmark was aware that it represented the last presiding Nordic country prior to the beginning of the second Action Plan.

In order to prepare for the new Action Plan, Denmark organised a Third Foreign Ministers' Conference, which was concluded with the 'Guidelines for a New Action Plan'. On 10 June 2003, six months after the closure of the Danish Presidency, the Commission presented the second Action Plan for 2004-2006, approved by the Council in September, and endorsed by the Brussels European Council in October 2003 (Brussels European Council, 16-17 October 2003§43). The Action Plan sets out "general principles and methodology, key objectives and priorities, and the mechanisms by which the implementation of Northern Dimension activities will be kept under review" (European Commission, 10/06/2003:2. See further below).

The Action Plan is based on the Guidelines for the new Action Plan, and is therefore very similar to this document. Despite the fact that all the ND partner countries presented their views and priorities for the new Action Plan, as Denmark prepared the formulation of and wordings in the Guidelines in its role as Presidency, it is possible to argue that it had particular possibilities to influence the content of the new Action Plan. Indeed, the new Action Plan covers the identical five issue-areas mentioned in the Guidelines and the same two prioritised regions – the Arctic region and Kaliningrad. The emphasised geographical focus and the attention given to

cross-border cooperation, as well as several topics on the list of prioritised action such as business promotion concur with Danish priorities (see European Commission, 10/06/2003:3-4).

Hence, the Danish government succeeded in stressing its particular interests *vis-à-vis* the implementation of the ND. It also contributed to the intended strengthened involvement of Greenland in the ND implementation phase. It is mentioned that many of the sectors encompassed in the new Action Plan “are of particular relevance for Greenland”. “Whenever possible and appropriate, Greenland should be involved in the implementation of this Action Plan through Community programmes open to Greenlandic participation.” (European Commission, 10/06/2003:15).

The second Action Plan stresses the importance of having adequate and timely mechanisms for monitoring progress, reviewing achievements and identifying shortcomings. It suggests a number of mechanisms, which are more or less identical to those included in the Guidelines and similar to those presented by the Swedish Presidency at the Second Foreign Ministers’ Conference (European Commission, 10/06/2003:16). These mechanisms are important elements of the decision-making procedures within the ND regime:

- Annual Commission reports should be presented on ND activities.⁴²
- An Internet-based system is proposed, that would provide updates on key activities.
- Annual Senior Officials meetings should be convened to provide political guidance on and assess the implementation of the Action Plan.⁴³
- Annual forums on the implementation of the Action Plan organised by the ESC, would be helpful.
- Finally, regular forums organised by the Committee of the regions, were considered useful.

The presented new Action Plan ensures the continuity of the ND process, which belonged to one of Denmark's main priorities. In addition, it mentions that the senior officials meeting in 2005 should be able to make recommendations on the follow-up to the second Action Plan and on the issues to be addressed after 2006 (European Commission, 10/06/2003:16). This strengthens even more the continuity of the ND process and shows its long-term perspective.

In addition to the preparations of the second Action Plan, other initiatives taken during the Danish Presidency contribute to the concrete implementation of common ND objectives. The main purpose with the NDPPS as described above, is to contribute to concrete cooperation and joint activities to tackle challenges in the area of public health and social wellbeing. The initial steps to establish the NDPPS were taken during the Danish Presidency, much thanks to Finnish actions. In addition, the launch of the NDEP Support Fund is another task that contributes to the concrete implementation of the ND.

⁴² Two reports have already been presented (in 2001 and 2002). A third was prepared at the end of 2003.

2.3.2 Partial Regime Reproduction – Integration of the Northern

Dimension in the New Developing Proximity Policy

After several initiatives – amongst others a number of British ones – beginning in the late 1990s, the Copenhagen European Council confirmed for the first time the new proximity policy as part of the EU's political agenda (Copenhagen European Council, 2003§22. See also Barnes, 2003:5-6). On a Danish initiative, the Commission was given the task to submit a communication on the relations with the new neighbours. Accordingly, in March 2003, the Commission's presented its Communication on 'Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours', which was endorsed by the Thessaloniki European Council in June the same year (Thessaloniki European Council, 2003§44). This Communication, together with the Commission Communication on 'Paving the way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument', introduced in July 2003, are currently the most comprehensive documents on the new developing proximity policy. They could therefore show us to what extent the Danish Presidency succeeded with its ambition to integrate the ND within the Wider Europe initiative, and whether it is seen as a model for cooperation in other regional contexts.

As expressed by Prodi, the aim of the developing proximity policy is to extend to the post-enlargement EU neighbours a set of principles, values, rules and standards, common to all member-states, as well as sectoral co-operation, which will enable the

⁴³ These should bring together representatives from EU institutions, EU member-states, partner countries, regional bodies, and IFIs.

development of an “all-embracing special relationship” with shared principles and values (Prodi, 26/11/2002; Prodi, 06/12/2002).

There are several similarities between the two Commission communications on ‘Wider Europe’ and the ND (see also Catellani, 2003:39). The three key words in the EU’s cooperation with Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, the countries in the Western Balkans and the 10 Eastern and Southern Mediterranean countries, are stated as the shared values of security, stability and sustainable development. The importance of avoiding new dividing-lines in Europe is stressed. These aspects also constitute the core values of the ND. In order to meet existing challenges connected to these three values, “the whole range of the Union’s policies (foreign, security, trade, development, environment and others) will need to rise” (European Commission, 11/03/2003:3). This element is also comparable to the Northern Dimension’s horizontal approach and composite character, which touches upon many EU policies.

In addition, the mentioned challenges that need to be addressed in cooperation with these countries are similar to those included in the ND: transborder environmental and nuclear hazards, communicable diseases, illegal immigration, public health, trafficking, and organised crime or terrorist networks. Cross-border cooperation as regards border-crossings, transport, infrastructure, telecommunications, education, cultural links, energy, investment promotion, support for WTO accession, are other important areas in which to co-operate that also concur with those in the ND, although the Wider Europe initiative may have a stronger emphasis on crisis management and conflict prevention (European Commission, 11/03/2003:6;

European Commission, 01/07/2003:5-6. See also Council of the European Union, 2003§6).

In addition, the intended increased interoperability between the TACIS, PHARE and INTERREG cross-border programmes, as well as the proximity policy's proposed implementation through action plans, are similar to the features of the ND (European Commission, 01/07/2003:7; Council of the European Union, 2003§7).⁴⁴ On 9 July 2003, the Commission decided to establish a 'Wider Europe Task Force' with the assignment to further develop this policy and draw up action plans in consultation with the countries concerned. Hence, a consultative approach – as is the case in the ND – is also included in the new policy (European Commission, 09/07/2003).

However, whilst the ND geographically involves both current members, candidate countries and non-candidates, it is explicitly expressed in the Wider Europe initiative that it does not apply to countries that have an EU membership perspective (European Commission, 11/03/2003:4).⁴⁵ The ND can therefore be seen as a part of this new policy only through its partner country Russia.

The ND is mentioned in the first Communication as the “only regional framework in which the EU participates with its Eastern partners to address trans-national and cross-border issues. But participation is restricted to Russia”. It is further stated that new initiatives to encourage regional cooperation between Russia and the countries of the Western Newly Independent States (NIS) – the sometimes called 'Eastern

⁴⁴ However, the Wider Europe initiative also includes the MEDA and CARDS programmes (European Commission, 01/07/2003:6-7).

⁴⁵ Reference is here made to the candidate countries of Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania, as well as to the countries at the Western Balkans, which are seen as potential candidates. However, in the

Dimension' – could “draw upon the Northern Dimension concept to take a broader and more inclusive approach to dealing with neighbourhood issues.” (European Commission, 11/03/2003:8. See also Filtenborg *et al.*, 2002:399). Moreover, efforts to combat transboundary pollution should be “modelled on the collaborative approach taken by the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership” (European Commission, 11/03/2003:12).

The ND is not explicitly included as a part of the developing proximity policy in the Commission communications. However, it is mentioned as being a potential model for similar cooperation schemes towards the Western NIS. Consequently, the ND is not a model for the Wider Europe initiative as such, but for a selected part of it.⁴⁶ In addition, the NDEP is mentioned as a model for cooperation to use within the context of the new proximity policy in order combat transboundary pollution. As previously mentioned, this model consists of close coordination of EU funds, other donor funds and loans from IFIs in order to finance projects related to the ND instead of having a specific EU budget-line (Groenbjerg, 07/12/2002:4).

Moreover, in the ‘Council Conclusions on Wider Europe – New Neighbourhood’ from June 2003, which welcomes the first Commission communication, it is explicitly expressed that

Communication from July 2003, the Western Balkan countries are included in the initiative (European Commission, 01/07/2003:4-5).

⁴⁶ In this context, it is stated in the second Action Plan that the “Northern Dimension will have an important contribution to make in carrying forward the Union’s new neighbourhood policy, building on shared interests and a common agenda between the enlarged Union and its neighbours.” (European Commission, 10/06/2003:3).

the new neighbourhood policies should not override the existing framework for EU relations with Russia, the Eastern European countries, and the Southern Mediterranean partners, as developed in the context of relevant agreements, common strategies, the Northern Dimension Initiative and of the Barcelona Process. ... Implementation of existing agreements remains a priority (Council of the European Union, 2003§4).

Hence, the ND can in some ways be seen as a part of the new Wider Europe policy, although not being replaced by it.

The Danish government can be seen as fairly successful in its ambition to integrate the ND within the Wider Europe initiative and to reproduce its cooperation model in a new context. However, rather than lifting out the ND as a prosperous model of well functioning cross-border cooperation, which could be applicable in other areas of the Union's 'near abroad', the relations with in particular the European Economic Area, as well as the Mediterranean region seem to have influenced the Wider Europe initiative, as seen through the Commission communications of 2003. The EEA is for instance seen as "a model for integrated relations with our neighbours" (Prodi, 06/12/2002). Instead of making a link to a potential future EU membership – which is the EU's strongest foreign policy instrument – in order to promote political and economic reforms in neighbouring countries, as well as an alignment with the *acquis*, the countries are offered as a carrot the prospect for a stake in the Internal Market and to take advantage of the four freedoms. This is currently the case with the EEA countries (European Commission, 11/03/2003:4, 15; Council of the European Union, 2003§6). Consequently, the developing proximity policy clearly expresses the EU's objective to export its commonly accepted principles, values, standards and policies to neighbouring countries.

The new proximity policy resembles the ND in terms of its goals, principles and values, in the description of existing challenges and in its ways to address them, as well as regards the implementation mechanisms involved. However, its more explicit references to the ND – concrete regime reproduction – are limited to the usefulness of the NDEP and the Northern Dimension as such for the relations with Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. Hence, partial regime reproduction seems to be the case as Denmark chose to emphasise the similarities between the ND and the Wider Europe initiative, and to stress the usefulness and applicability of the former for the latter. Indeed, it is mentioned in the Presidency conclusions from the Brussels European Council in October 2003 that “the Northern Dimension will have an important contribution to make in carrying forward the Union’s new neighbourhood policy in the entire region” (Brussels European Council, October 2003§43).

The ND is seen by Danish officials as more or less dependent on a Nordic Presidency for its promotion. In order to ensure its continuity during the period until the next potential Nordic Presidency in 2006 when other member-states are sharing the Council, the Danish strategy was to integrate the ND as a natural part of the Wider Europe initiative (Interviewee 15, 02/05/2002; Interviewee 16, 06/05/2003).

However, the Danish ambition to integrate the ND within the Wider Europe initiative seems to contain some difficulties. As the new proximity policy only addresses neighbouring countries that are unlikely to become EU members in the medium-term, Russia is the only ND partner that complies with this criterion. The added value with the ND, namely that it involves different categories of countries at equal

footing, seems to be a missing concept in the developing proximity policy, at least in the Commission communications.

In addition, the new proximity policy is a pure EU initiative for its neighbouring regions in which the new neighbours have no say in the setting of the agenda, in the formulation of objectives and means. The only case where the partners would be consulted is when individual action plans are being agreed upon. The ND is an “EU-led initiative”, but it does not only include EU actors in its formulation, development and implementation (European Commission, 10/06/2003:2; Haukkala, 2003:18-19). It also remains to be seen how the new proximity policy will develop.

2.3.3 Potential Regime Transformation and the Second Action Plan

Through the joint document presented in July 2002, it has become evident that Denmark together with the Commission emphasised that the concretisation of the enlargement would change the circumstances for the ND. They criticised the first Action Plan for being too project oriented, solely providing a list of individual projects instead of emphasising the underlying objectives and priorities of the ND. They stressed the value of a deeper concentration on clear strategic objectives, goals and priorities within each of the key issue-areas of the ND. The ND would also benefit from a new Action Plan, providing an indication of the mechanisms for co-ordination between all the partners concerned and of appropriate monitoring and review arrangements.

The Danish Presidency underlined the need for a certain alteration of the objectives, priorities and activities of the ND regime as a consequence of the enlargement. This can be seen as an attempt to somewhat transform at least a part of the regime. Whether this approach succeeded can be visible through the second Action Plan.

The key purpose with the second Action Plan is to provide “a clear operational framework for all Northern Dimension stakeholders, setting out strategic objectives, priorities and concrete activities.” It provides “a common framework for the promotion of policy dialogue and concrete cooperation” (European Commission, 10/06/2003:2). This was stressed by Denmark. One can notice that the old priorities of security and stability (together with sustainable development) are not listed in the new Action Plan. Instead, sustainable development seems to be the most important principle for the post-enlargement ND. It is stated that “sustainable and sustained economic growth” is the key priority for the 2004-2006 period (European Commission, 10/06/2003:4).

It is emphasised that the enlargement “takes the Northern Dimension into a new phase” and that this will have implications for the ND region (European Commission, 10/06/2003:3). The opportunities and challenges posed by the enlargement are therefore addressed in the new Action Plan. “In this context, strengthened interaction at all levels between Russia and the EU is essential”. (European Commission, 10/06/2003:3-4). The political dialogue and enhanced post-enlargement relations with Russia can be seen as a strengthened principle in the new Action Plan.

In sum, there is a change in the new Action Plan due to the actual enlargement as regards objectives, principles and goals. The most important objective of the 'new' ND is strengthened relations at all levels with Northwest Russia, and the key principle seems to be sustainable development. This principle was the most emphasised one by Denmark and it was a general theme of the Presidency, not only in the field of the ND. Cross-border cooperation is now even further highlighted as an important regime value, also stressed by Denmark.

A second key objective is to address challenges and issues that are related to the concrete enlargement, such as illegal immigration, organised crime and environmental problems (Interviewee 4, 06/05/2003). In the first Action Plan, the three Baltic States and Poland were non-EU partner countries. The second Action Plan is implemented with these countries as new members, which is a logical but important change to the ND. The adaptation of the ND to the actual enlargement can be seen as the reason behind a certain modification of the ND regime, which Denmark contributed to.

Denmark's ambition to integrate the ND in the Wider Europe initiative can also be seen as an example of a certain regime transformation in terms of an alteration of its very status. Despite the fact that it has been explicitly mentioned by the Council that the new proximity policy will not replace the ND, in the long run, if the Wider Europe initiative evolves substantially, a possible development could be that the ND becomes a kind of a 'composite sub-regime' within the broader and more heterogeneous 'composite policy regime' of the Wider Europe initiative. The principles of the ND now also exist in this broader framework, and there are many

other similarities between them. Nevertheless, there are currently essential differences between the ND and the Wider Europe initiative, which makes such a development speculative. However, the very fact that there are important differences between the two also strengthens a potential transformation of the ND regime through this Danish attempt to integrate it within the Wider Europe initiative.

3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Since the end of the Cold War, a pronounced Danish foreign policy priority has been to contribute to the EU's enlargement. A particular focus has been to integrate the three Baltic States in the EU and to strengthen the cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. Denmark has launched several initiatives in the post-Cold War era towards the Baltic Sea region – one of them being the creation of the CBSS – and it is well known among the other member-states that it has a strong interest in the development of this part of Europe. In 1993, it was in Copenhagen that Central and Eastern European countries first were promised a membership perspective. It is therefore rather logical that the enlargement process became the one Danish Presidency priority.

The Danish government took advantage of the Presidency function of agenda-shaping by focusing on one major priority theme – the enlargement – which also was a set task on the Union's agenda. As a consequence, also the general relations to Russia and the ND were integrated in this field in connection to the new developing proximity policy. Hence, the main focus on the enlargement could to some extent

explain why Denmark chose to integrate the ND within a wider neighbourhood context, that it was not given a more pronounced position in the Presidency programme and that it was not mentioned at all in the Presidency conclusions.

Denmark had in general terms the opportunity to emphasise and illuminate issues related to the ND in the preparation and organisation of meetings and in the writing of concluding documents from various conferences and gatherings. In some of these, the ND was described somewhat differently from what had been done by Finland and Sweden, namely as a natural and integral part of the EU's developing proximity policy and as being a useful cooperation framework for this. Denmark also stressed the importance of altering the orientation of the ND so that it would fit post-enlargement Europe.

The tense Denmark-Russia relations affected Russia's position *vis-à-vis* its participation at the Third Foreign Ministers' Conference and the resulting 'Guidelines', which in a sense limited the Danish room of manoeuvre.

Denmark seemed to give priority to a limited number of *issue-areas*, namely business climate, economy and infrastructure; cooperation within the areas of energy, transport and communication; and cooperation within the fields of research, education, human resources and health; as well as cross-border cooperation and regional development. The 'Arctic Window' was given particular attention through the Conference in Greenland. This resulted in the emphasised geographical focus in the second Action Plan on the Arctic region, besides the region of Kaliningrad.

The Presidency drew attention to the *principles, objectives and priorities* involved in the ND regime. In order to adapt the ND to the enlargement, it stressed the need for a certain reshaping of these elements. The most important principle highlighted by Denmark was sustainable development, and it emphasised that the ND should be seen as a 'process' and a framework concept for 'political dialogue', for 'co-ordination' and 'co-operation'. These can be seen as important regime values that Denmark wanted to draw attention to. In addition, cross-border cooperation and a strengthened dialogue with Russia were seen as key elements and perhaps the most important values in the ND regime.

The emphasis on *regime procedures and rules* can be noticed throughout the Danish Presidency term. In particular the 'Guidelines for a New Action Plan' includes important procedures for facilitating the making and implementation of the ND regime. The two organised ministerial conferences can be seen as developing the procedures of the regime. Denmark also stressed how a division of labour could look like in concrete terms among the regional organisations involved in ways of making the implementation of the ND more efficient. Regional organisations were in general considered important, and the role of the NCM was accentuated.

The launch of the NDEP Support Fund and the initial steps taken to establish the NDPPS can be seen as introducing new decision-making procedures and some new rules within the ND composite regime. In addition, implicit regime rules were advanced by the Kaliningrad agreement on transit, and others were stressed through the Danish support of the MNEPR agreement.

Denmark was given the task to prepare the ground for a second Action Plan through the presentation of the document ‘Guidelines for a new Action Plan’, and some of its activities consequently focused on the *implementation phase* of the regime. This explains the Danish attention given to the decision-making procedures of the ND regime, and the limited number of issue-areas in focus. However, it is important to notice that many of the concrete initiatives taken during the Presidency in order to enhance the implementation of the ND were either due to prior EU decisions (such as the ‘Guidelines’ and the launch of the NDEP Support Fund), or the activities of other actors (the NDPPS).

Denmark also contributed with a partial *reproduction* of the ND regime by attempting to integrate it in the Wider Europe initiative and by using it as a model for the latter. The Danish government succeeded at least partly with this ambition.

In addition, Denmark emphasised that the actual enlargement would change the circumstances for the ND. It underlined the need for a certain alteration of the objectives, priorities and activities of the ND regime. This can be seen as a Danish attempt to *transform* at least a part of the regime, and explains the high Danish focus on the regime principles. In the new Action Plan, even stronger emphasis is put on enhanced relations with Northwest Russia – its most important objective – and the key principle seems to be sustainable development. A second objective is to address challenges and issues that are related to the actual enlargement. Denmark’s ambition to integrate the ND in the Wider Europe initiative can also be seen in this perspective (see also the discussion in Chapter VII).

The two main ND themes of the Danish Presidency were to prepare the ground for a new Action Plan covering the years 2004-2006, and to integrate the ND as a natural part of the EU's developing policy towards its nearest post-enlargement neighbours. These two approaches would ensure the continuity of the ND regime in the context where the next following Nordic Presidency would be held at earliest in 2006; they would contribute to the further concretisation of the ND through specific activities; and through some modifications adapt the ND to its post-enlargement reality where a majority of the partner countries would have become EU members. Denmark considered a Nordic Presidency fundamental for the development of the ND, and wanted to secure its persistence also when this was not the case.

Since the closure of the Danish Presidency, the second Action Plan has been endorsed, the 'Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing' has been officially launched, the MNEPR has finally been signed and the 'Northern eDimension Action Plan' has been further developed. The Wider Europe initiative has also been further shaped.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

1. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

1.1 The Influence of the Presidency on the EU's Foreign Policy

Agenda

As previously noted, the EU Presidency can be seen as one actor among several involved in the formulation, development and implementation of the Northern Dimension regime. It is an actor with both national and supranational priorities. It might promote the interests and main concerns of the chairing member-state, whilst simultaneously having an obligation to act for the general integration process. Consequently, national foreign policy priorities, interests and motivations, and the general direction of the issues on the Union's foreign policy agenda are two contexts that influence the priorities, activities and general actorness of the Presidency in the EU's external relations. These elements – together with unforeseen external events – also account for differences between various presidencies.

The Presidency has the possibility to influence the EU's foreign policy agenda through its various functions. Its room of manoeuvre is however limited due to a number of reasons. Below, we will see to what extent the three Nordic presidencies managed to influence the EU's external relations in the policy field of the ND. Their

performance and achievements vary in some cases due to both internal matters and external circumstances. Here, we will look at the different Presidency functions and compare the presidencies in order to assess their possibility to influence the EU's political agenda.

1.1.1 Administration, Management and Co-ordination

As regards the first Presidency function of administration and management, it is important that the Presidency is perceived as efficient. Despite the fact that Denmark, Finland and Sweden belong to the group of smaller member-states, are located in the geographical periphery of the EU, and two of them have no previous experience of chairing the Union, all the three presidencies were considered by external observers well prepared, efficient, as paying attention to the neutrality norm and as taking the Presidency role seriously (cf. Leonard, 2000; Stubb, 2000:51-53; Miles, 2002b:131, 142; Tallberg, ed. 2001:56-60; Elgström, 2002b:45-46; Miles, 2003a:320; Friis, 2003b:49; Tiilikainen, 2003:111). Thus, this contradicts those who claim that smaller member-states could have a disadvantage when it comes to presiding the Council (cf. Wurzel, 1995:38; Svensson, 2000:16 ff.).

The three countries had a stable domestic political situation with strong public support for the government in office and a well functioning central administration at the time for their presidencies, despite the fact that the Danish government was relatively new and undertook some criticised cooperation with a far right party. In addition, the three countries prioritised developing extensive relations and carried out exchanges with the EU supranational institutions in view of and during their

Presidency term, which probably contributed, together with their experience of international contacts and negotiations, to their perceived efficiency. Such cooperation also seems more important for smaller member-states with less resources.

There was a general image of the countries as being efficient, open and competent, with the capacity to manage large organisational challenges as is the case when presiding the EU. However, the most important difference between the three countries concerns the external expectations on the respective Presidency prior to the time in office, linked to their general view on the integration process. Finland can be considered the most 'integration-friendly' country among the three. It participates fully in the integration process, whilst Denmark and Sweden maintain reservations as regards certain cooperation fields and have a rather strong EU-opposition both within the political elite as well as among their citizens. This is especially the case in Denmark, which has a number of 'opt-outs' and often organises referenda on new EU treaties. These elements caused some worries prior to the Swedish and Danish Presidency term, but did not seem to have influenced their general performance in a negative manner. However, the number of 'federo-sceptics' was not markedly reduced after their term in office, which many had hoped for.

According to most evaluators, the three managed the Presidency role well and handled the tasks assigned to them in an organised manner. However, Finland was criticised for its exclusion of the German language from its official languages, which resulted in a German and Austrian boycott of the informal ministerial meetings. Moreover, the Danish leadership potential and its possibilities to influence the

Union's political agenda were restricted in its 'opt-out' fields. This was emphasised by the Danish government after its term in office, announcing that the 'opt-outs' ought to be abolished.

In their Presidency role, the three governments had a particular opportunity to bring up and prioritise various issue-areas in the field of the ND, as they prepared, organised and chaired all meetings in the Council machinery, and in the formulation of concluding documents after foreign ministers' conferences, in background materials and the Presidency conclusions. They could thus influence the EU's external relations. This seems especially evident when it comes to Finland. It had the ND as a clear priority theme on the Presidency agenda, although being presented as an initiative of strong overall Union interest.

The Finnish strategy was to introduce the ND prior to its term in office so that the initiative could be firmly established on the Union's agenda during the Presidency term. Through this strategy, Finland also avoided criticism from the other member-states for promoting a topic of strong national interest and for breaking the neutrality norm; the ND had already become an EU policy approach. It was even expected that Finland would show some leadership towards the northern parts of Europe, in particular Russia. This was also the case for the other two Nordic countries. Both EU institutions and other member-states expected that they would draw attention to Russia and the cooperation and particular conditions in the ND region.

The text on the ND was more limited in the Swedish Presidency programme (and in the government's presented list of Presidency results), compared to the Finnish one.

Instead, the Swedish main Presidency theme was three-fold, namely enlargement, environment and employment. However, two of the main Presidency priorities were also relevant for the development of the ND: Sweden has always supported the accession of the three Baltic States and Poland, and environmental protection was a prioritised issue in the field of the ND.

Denmark had the enlargement as its main Presidency theme in which the ND and the relations to Russia were incorporated in connection to the EU's developing new proximity policy. This single-issue focus could also explain why the ND was integrated in a wider neighbourhood context and was given a rather limited position in the Presidency programme. In contrast to the other Nordic presidencies, Denmark did not mention the ND at all in the Presidency conclusions, although the formulations on the Wider Europe initiative resemble very much those of the ND. This can be explained by the fact that Denmark saw the ND as an integrated part of the new developing proximity policy. All three stressed the importance of keeping the other member-states involved in the ND, and emphasised the 'Union' character of the initiative.

1.1.2 Policy Initiation and Agenda-Shaping

There are several ways a Presidency can influence the EU's political agenda in its role as agenda-shaper and policy initiator. This function was used in various ways in relation to the ND. Finland was very active in drawing attention to, presenting and emphasising ND concerns at the agenda of various Council formations, at international conferences, and it was incorporated in the Presidency submitted bases

for discussion. This strategy suited the Finnish intention to firmly establish the ND on the Union's foreign policy agenda. As Finland put a lot energy in stressing Northern Dimension concerns all along its Presidency term, it managed to draw the EU's attention to the region and thereby influencing the external relations' agenda. However, as noticed, this influence would perhaps have been stronger if the external preconditions for the Presidency had been more favourable, in particular as regards the member-states' reactions to the Russian activities in Chechnya.

The Finnish strategy was to launch the ND initiative in view of its pending Presidency term, which can be seen as an example of *agenda-setting*. The Danish promotion of the Wider Europe initiative to which the ND was related, can also be seen as a case of agenda-setting. As the ND had become a Union initiative not long before the opening of its Presidency term, Finland could also contribute to *agenda-structuring* through profiling certain issue-areas and aspects of the ND, whilst simultaneously shaping the structure of ongoing discussions both within the Council machinery and at international conferences.

Agenda-structuring was also evident during the Swedish and the Danish presidencies. The two seized the opportunity given to them through their function as chairman to influence the EU's political agenda in the field of the ND by emphasising certain elements and issue-areas of their own interest, and contributing to developing it according to national preferences.

However, the most important aspect of agenda-shaping similar to all three countries was their efforts to ensure the position of the ND on the EU's foreign policy agenda

after their Presidency term. This approach can be explained by their shared view that a Nordic Presidency is important, if not vital, for the development of the ND regime. Also Commission officials have pronounced on this position. The continuity of the ND process was secured during the Finnish Presidency through its call for an Action Plan covering the years 2000-2003 and through the announced Swedish intention at the first Foreign Ministers' Conference to organise a follow-up meeting. The Swedish government contributed to the continuity of the ND by its formulations in the 'Full Report' on the ND and through the Danish pronounced intention during the Swedish Presidency term that it should organise a high-level follow-up meeting during its coming Presidency in 2002.

Denmark had a somewhat different strategy from its Nordic neighbours. Both in speeches and documents, the ND was described as a natural and integral part of the EU's developing proximity policy and as being a useful cooperation framework for this. Moreover, the government stressed the need to modify the orientation of the ND so that it would fit Europe post-enlargement. The rationale behind this strategy was to ensure that the ND would remain on the EU's external relations' agenda also after the Danish Presidency term and after the finalising of the (first) eastern enlargement, expected in 2004. In addition, the continuity of the ND was ensured through the 'Guidelines' presented at the Third Foreign Ministers' Conference and the preparations of a second Action Plan that would cover the years 2004-2006. The three Nordic countries also emphasised the important role of the Commission for the continuation of the ND. This role was considered central in periods when Nordic states were not chairing the Council.

All three governments also encountered certain limitations to their room of manoeuvre as regards their possibility to influence the Union's foreign policy agenda.

First, many issues on their agenda in the field of the ND had been determined by previous EU decisions, and several tasks had been given to them in view of their presidencies. For Finland, it had already been established by the Cologne European Council that the Finnish Presidency would organise a foreign ministers' conference and to consider the possibility of drawing up an Action Plan. For Sweden, the preparation of the 'Full Report' was invited by the Feira European Council. For Denmark, the NDEP Support Fund Pledging Conference only happened to take place during its Presidency period. The Göteborg European Council decided that it would be organised by the Commission and the EBRD. The Commission's Communication on 'Kaliningrad: Transit' also happened to be presented during the Danish Presidency, which influenced the Council discussions on the topic. As for the Finnish Presidency, also Denmark was given the task by previous EU decisions to prepare the ground for an Action Plan through producing the 'Guidelines for a New Action Plan' at the Third Foreign Ministers' Conference.

Yet, it is important to notice that the three countries in many cases were behind these very EU decisions guiding their Presidency activities. For example, Sweden contributed to the three-issue focus in the Feira Action Plan in view of its Presidency term, which also became its main focus in the field of the ND. In addition, its emphasis on concrete action and the implementation phase of the ND regime was a clear Swedish priority, although fitting with the conclusions of the Feira European

Council. Moreover, despite the fact that many topics were positioned on their Presidency agenda by previous EU decisions, it was still possible to influence these particular fields along with their own preferences and national priorities through their agenda-structuring function.

Second, some external events had a narrowing effect on their room of manoeuvre and influenced the results the presidencies had intended to achieve. The Swedish government seems to have been in the most favourable position among the three. It was spared from important unpredicted external events that might have had limited its room of manoeuvre. Further, the relations to Russia were rather calm during the Swedish Presidency. However, whilst Sweden prioritised good relations to the Russian government, it was criticised by other member-states for not acting with harsher attitudes towards the Russian activities in Chechnya.

The Finnish Presidency was markedly influenced by exactly these Russian military actions in Chechnya, which resulted in the poor political backing of the First Foreign Ministers' Conference by the other member-states and to the delay in the implementation of the Common Strategy on Russia and the PCA. This also illustrates how the Presidency results to a large extent depend on the co-operation and support of the other member-states.

For Denmark, the most important external event that affected its Presidency agenda was the tense relations to Russia resulting from the organising of the Chechen World Congress and the case of Sakajev. The deterioration of the Denmark-Russia relations led to Russia's withdrawal from participating as an equal partner after the Third

Foreign Ministers' Conference, that it made a reservation in relation to the Conclusions of the Chair and found the 'Guidelines' inappropriate for the formulation of the new Action Plan. The EU-Russia Summit was also for this reason convened in Brussels instead of Copenhagen. Consequently, the Denmark-Russia relations affected the ND during the Danish Presidency term.

Third, the length of the Presidency term had a limiting effect on the influence. A lot of initiatives taken during the Finnish Presidency were not achieved in concrete terms until after its term. The Action Plan that was advanced during the Presidency, for instance, was not approved until the Feira European Council the following year. For Sweden, although a large number of discussions were initiated with Russia in various fields, they produced limited concrete outcomes during the Presidency. The negotiations on the MNEPR agreement that were prioritised and advanced during all three presidencies, were not concluded until May 2003. Moreover, the Danish ambition to integrate the ND within the Wider Europe initiative could not be met until a few months after its term in office when the Commission presented its first communication on the matter.

1.1.3 Mediation and Consensus-Building

All three governments underlined their ambition to serve the interests of the EU and to contribute to the development of the integration process, whilst down-playing their own national preferences. This was perhaps especially evident for Finland and Sweden which chaired the Council for the first time, wanting to make a good first

impression, whilst Denmark seemed to give prominence to the leadership function in the enlargement portfolio.

Smaller member-states are sometimes seen as being better positioned as neutral mediators and consensus-seekers than larger ones, which often want to proceed with their own national preferences, despite existing disagreements among the member-states. There were indeed expectations on three governments that they would be honest brokers due to the small size of the countries, their consensus tradition, experience of international mediation and – for Finland and Sweden – their tradition of neutrality policy.

As most of the Council negotiations and discussions at international conferences start around some Presidency produced documents, and as the Presidency in general is in charge of drawing up a concluding compromise text at the end of the negotiations, the chairman has an opportunity to influence the EU's external relations through its own terminology and choice of words in the final document. This was the case for the three Nordic countries and perhaps the most visible through their presented Conclusions of the Chair from the foreign ministers' conferences. The Conclusions of the Chair are compromise texts based on the negotiations, individual contributions and position papers presented at the conferences. The text produced by the Danish Presidency – the 'Guidelines for a New Action Plan' – was used by the Commission when it prepared the second Action Plan. This shows how influential these documents can be for the further development of an initiative on the Union's foreign policy agenda, and strengthens the potential of the Presidency to influence the formulation of this. The text from the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference – the

‘Full Report on Northern Dimension Policies’ – prepared by Sweden, also constitutes an influential document for the development of the ND.

The conference agenda was further put together by each respective Presidency, including themes that suited both their national preferences and the phase the ND was situated in. They also presented discussion background papers which together with the conference agenda drew up guidelines for what the participants should focus on during the negotiations. Many of the wordings of for instance the Swedish Presidency discussion paper at the Second Foreign Ministers’ Conference were included in the ‘Full Report’, and Danish formulations and interests were incorporated in the ‘Guidelines’, which are also found in the new Action Plan. In addition, the three conferences left limited space for debate, and the concluding texts were not subject to the same level of scrutiny as the Action Plan and other ND key documents (see also Catellani, 2003:21).

This possibility to influence the final compromise text was also the case at other international conferences, summits and seminars, as well as at general Council meetings that dealt with ND issues. Especially Finland was very active in including its ND concerns at the agenda of various Council formations. The Presidency conclusions can be seen as the final opportunity for the Presidency to include its own national formulations in this compromise text.

1.1.4 Representation

Sweden was more active than expected as the EU's external representative, which also had a positive impact on the development of the ND. The government succeeded in organising summits with both the Russian and the American president, at which it had the opportunity to bring up Northern Dimension related issues. Denmark represented the Union's external relations towards for instance the USA and Canada at the Greenland conference, which also gave it the opportunity to give attention to its perceived concerns. It also organised a number of international conferences and seminars that dealt with ND related topics.

However, Finland seems to have been the most active country in drawing attention to and spreading the understanding among both member-states and other countries in Europe and North America for its concerns and priorities in the field of the ND. Both at international conferences, seminars, meetings with groups of countries and in the EU's dialogue with certain third countries, Finland drew attention to this field. It consequently managed to influence third countries in its priority fields, which probably would have been more difficult outside the framework of the EU. The intensive marketing strategy of the ND during the Finnish Presidency also fitted Finland's main objective, namely to get it firmly established on the external relations' agenda of an enlarging Union.

1.2 Emphasised Issue-Areas and Regime Components for the Development of the Regime

All regime actors have the possibility to influence the very development of the international regime, even if some actors may have greater means in doing so depending on access to resources. The EU Presidency is here seen as an important regime actor as it has through its different functions (see above) a particular possibility to influence the development of a foreign policy initiative on the EU's agenda in comparison with other member-states. A member-state may during its Presidency period focus on certain issue-areas in the regime; it may define the issue-areas involved in various ways according to its own preferences; it may put greater or less attention to one or several of the regime components; and it may lay its own meaning to the regime principles, norms, decision-making procedures and rules. These manners contribute to the overall regime-building process.

1.2.1 Promoted Principles, Norms and Issue-Areas

As argued by Ingebritsen (2002:11 ff.), Nordic states may in general international politics be seen as 'norm entrepreneurs'.⁴⁷ They are successfully exporting common norms abroad especially in three issue-areas: sustainable development practices, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and the norm of transferring resources internationally from rich to poor. This is also visible in EU policy-making.

⁴⁷ This they became because of their peripheral geographical position, limited material capabilities (resulting in concerns for environmental protection), and unique domestic institutions (prominence of social democratic institutions and preference for consensus in policy-making).

Each of the Nordic presidencies can be seen as an example on how member-states within the EU in general are trying to use the Presidency function in order to draw the other member-states' attention to their own concerns and interests. These are often areas in which the countries see themselves as frontrunners. It is common that each member-state is trying to make the best out of the EU membership, emphasising features that are close to national interests, policies, values and norms, so that the EU would resemble a little more the particular country. This could in turn increase the citizens' support for the integration process.

For the Nordic states, it might be important to show the citizens that despite belonging to the group of smaller member-states and being located at the geographical periphery of the EU, it is still possible to influence both the internal and external policy-making of the Union in accordance with national convictions and values. This could also attract more EU supporters in particular Denmark and Sweden, which belong to the most 'federo-sceptic' EU countries. By promoting and highlighting traditional Nordic policies and values during their term in office, this could make the EU look more 'Nordic' and consequently strengthen the public support for the integration process.

Both in internal policy domains and in the EU's external relations this phenomenon is noticeable. In the EU's foreign policy, all three countries had a special focus on the eastern enlargement process and chose to draw attention to northern Europe, cooperation in the Baltic Sea region and EU-Russia relations. In addition, Finland and Sweden as military non-aligned countries, stressed the EU crisis management capacity (cf. Ingebritsen, 2002:13).

Nordic values were also stressed in the internal policies, such as openness and transparency, environmental protection, gender equality, employment, IT, Nordic welfare model values etc. These also represent areas in which the Nordic governments consider themselves as frontrunners, possessing important experiences that could be exported to other member-states. The countries used their Presidency term to illuminate issues they find important and policy-areas which are emphasised in their national policies. One can therefore conclude that all three have in the context of the ND attempted to export some national policies, values and norms, both to other member-states (and to the Nordic EFTA countries), but in particular towards Northwest Russia and the four candidate countries involved.

The three stressed the general *principles* involved in the ND framework, which also have been accepted by all the other participants, namely that cross-border co-operation in a great number of issue-areas as well as a reduction in the socio-economic dividing-lines that exist in the region, together are seen as contributing to the values of increased political stability, security and sustainable development. Soft-security challenges in the region, mainly connected to Russia, were seen as being addressed through intensified co-operation among the actors involved in the framework. Cross-border cooperation was a particularly stressed value by Finland and Denmark, and became more emphasised in the second Action Plan.

However, Denmark decided to somewhat modify the general principles of the ND so that it would fit the EU's post-enlargement reality. The Danish government (and to some extent also the Swedish) gave increased attention to sustainable development as the most important principle in the ND regime and it emphasised that the ND should

be seen as a process and a framework concept for political dialogue, for co-ordination and co-operation. In addition, strengthened relations to Northwest Russia at all levels became an enhanced principle.

All three also emphasised the regime *norms* of equal participation of the partner countries and the role and rights of other regional organisations involved; the latter aspect being more developed during the Swedish and Danish presidencies.

Although this shows Nordic commonality, there are still some differences between the three countries as regards the importance they gave to various *issue-areas* or aspects of certain issue-areas. The much stressed horizontal dimension by Finland also fitted its main Presidency focus, namely to firmly establish the ND as a permanent process on the EU's foreign policy agenda. Finland chose to draw attention to the totality of issue-areas involved in the process and not to a selected number of them.

The horizontal approach – its composite character – was further emphasised by the Finnish Presidency as one of the most important values of the ND, and it can even be seen as a regime norm. One argued that the horizontal approach would strengthen the role of the Commission as a great number of Directorate-Generals dealing with issues from all the three pillars would be involved. This would be lost if the focus were on a limited number of issue-areas. A weakened role for the Commission in the development of the ND could eventually jeopardize its very existence.

This argument fits the general Finnish conviction that the development of the ND is more or less dependent on the leadership of a Nordic Presidency. Moreover, the Finnish approach is rather logical as the ND concept at this time still was rather new, which made it important to bring up to discussion all the various issue-areas involved in the concept, rather than to focus on a few. As the initiative had matured, Sweden and Denmark could focus on a more limited number of issue-areas.

Despite this Finnish stressed horizontality, some issues seemed a little more emphasised than others, such as energy co-operation and the protection of the environment. The horizontal dimension, and energy co-operation coupled to sustainable development were emphasised by the Finnish Presidency as being important regime values.

Sweden decided to focus on a limited number of issue-areas; a strategy which also fitted its Presidency aim to fill the ND basket with concrete action and results, and to concentrate on its implementation. In order to present clearer results and concrete accomplishments, it is often easier to emphasise a limited number of issue-areas, than to focus on all of them. The intention with this strategy was also to make the issue-areas in focus clearer and more comprehensible for the Swedish citizens so that the number of 'EU sceptics' hopefully would be reduced.

In addition, the Swedish model for the ND fitted its general Presidency strategy; its focus on the three 'E's – enlargement, environment and employment – areas which also constitute traditional Swedish interests. In accordance with the Feira Action Plan, Sweden decided to give attention to environmental protection including nuclear

safety, the fight against organised crime and the situation in Kaliningrad. These represent the areas and values in the ND regime that Sweden found important to stress. IT and energy cooperation were other emphasised issue-areas. This narrow focus can in a sense be seen as weakening the composite character of the ND regime, which accounts for some Finnish reservations *vis-à-vis* the Swedish lifting out of a few issue-areas.

The Danish strategy was similar to the Swedish one, namely to focus on a limited number of issue-areas and to put implementation at the centre of attention. However, it seems as if Denmark went one step further. It emphasised that it could be useful to tighten up the focus of the ND to a limited number of priorities, themes and activities within each of the themes. Prioritised issue-areas in the ND regime were more numerous than during the Swedish Presidency, namely business promotion, economy and infrastructure; cooperation within the areas of energy, transport and communication; and cooperation within the fields of research, education, human resources and health; as well as cross-border cooperation and regional development. In a comparison with Finland and in particular Sweden, Denmark drew special attention to cross-border cooperation and its long experience of this, which was seen as a key principle, both in the context of the ND and the Wider Europe initiative.

The *geographical focus* of the ND was the same for all three, namely Northwest Russia, especially visible during the Danish Presidency, which prepared the ND for the concrete consequences of the enlargement. This focus explains the attention they all gave to the EU-Russia relations: the relations to Russia had a pronounced position in the Presidency programmes and a large number of activities were launched

towards Russia during the Presidency terms. Less emphasis was put on the Nordic partner countries.

However, there are some minor differences in focus. The Danish government decided – with strong Greenlandic support – to put a lot of attention to the Arctic part of the ND region. Denmark has in general been more active within the Arctic Council than its Nordic EU neighbours (Interviewee 9, 27/05/2002). However, it stressed that the focus in the ‘Arctic Window’ should be seen as the Arctic regions of Russia, thus not Greenland. Sweden emphasised the Baltic Sea region, which suits its general foreign policy priorities and the region of Kaliningrad, whilst giving less attention to the Arctic regions. Also Denmark highlighted the region of Kaliningrad, whilst Finland chose to emphasise its entire border-zone towards Russia (Interviewee 10, 08/03/2002).

The non-EU partner-countries bordering the Baltic Sea – in particular Russia – were by all seen as the main *addressees* in the ND. Hence, it is possible to argue that it is in particular these countries in the ND regime they wish to influence in accordance with their national preferences through an export of national policies, values and norms. One believed that such an export would contribute to increased security, stability and sustainable development in the region

The *main actors* that were deemed important for the development of the ND were the Nordic states and the non-EU partner countries. For the general development of the ND regime and its persistence on the EU’s foreign policy agenda, all three stressed the significant leadership of Nordic EU presidencies. However, they also emphasised

the importance to keep all member-states, not least the Mediterranean ones, actively involved in the ND. The Nordic presidencies and the Commission were seen as the key EU-actors, whilst the regional organisations of the CBSS, the BEAC and the AC, as well as the NCM were given an important role in the implementation phase. However, the role attributed to regional organisations was perhaps not as emphasised during the Finnish Presidency as was the case later during the Swedish and the Danish ones. This can be explained by the innovative character such co-operation with regional organisations in a Union initiative had at the time for the Finnish Presidency. By the time of the Swedish and Danish presidencies, the concept had matured. In addition, whilst Sweden gave special attention to the role of the CBSS, Denmark emphasised the position of the NCM.

Sweden presented a first concrete proposal on a division of labour between the Commission and regional organisations that highlighted their respective geographical coverage. This would avoid institutional overlaps and ensure a more efficient use of existing resources and capabilities for a more effective implementation of the ND. This idea was further developed by Denmark – in cooperation with the Commission – which made this division of labour even more concrete as regards the various tasks that should be divided. The three highlighted issue-areas in the first Action Plan would remain the focus and task of the Commission. The other regional organisations would be in charge of the implementation of other areas such as energy and infrastructure, public health, trade and business co-operation, education and research. This idea was, however, not included in the second Action Plan.

1.2.2 Decision-Making Procedures and Rules in Focus

The foreign ministers' conferences can be seen as perhaps the most important *decision-making procedure* within the ND regime. They give all the participants equal means to influence the further development of the ND, they constitute important guidelines for further action, and their conclusions are adopted both by EU-members and non-EU partner countries. These events were highly promoted by all three presidencies.

In order to anchor the ND on the EU's foreign policy agenda and to get the needed support for the composite regime by all its participants, Finland convened a first conference in Helsinki. Its modest political backing from the other member-states was therefore regretted. Sweden and Denmark had a better strategy for securing a great number of ministers as the conferences were scheduled in Luxembourg in connection to other EU meetings.

However, the outcome of the Danish organised conference became strongly affected by the tense Denmark-Russia relations in late 2002. Russia's decision to shoulder an observer role instead of participating as an equal partner, the fact that it did not consider itself bound by the Conclusions of the Chair and that it did not believe that the resulting 'Guidelines' was an appropriate background document for the second Action Plan, can be seen as weakening the composite regime. This is in particular the case as Russia is seen as the key partner country. If Russia views the ND as a 'paper regime' and does not believe in its principles, norms or decision-making procedures, the regime loses much of its *raison d'être*. Also the legitimacy of the second Action

Plan, which is based on the 'Guidelines', can be seen as wounded. Yet, as mentioned in Chapter III, if the regime still is seen as efficient by the actors, it is likely to persist even if the overall relations among some participants deteriorate.

Both Sweden and Denmark focused on the decision-making procedures involved in the ND regime. During their Presidency periods, the procedures became both developed and modified, which can be seen as an internal change of the composite regime. The two gave attention to a potential division of labour between the Commission and regional organisations involved in means of making the implementation of the ND more effective, which can be seen as a part of the decision-making procedures involved.

Other important procedures for the making and implementation of the ND regime that were stressed was the 'Full Report', presented by the Swedish Presidency. It included review mechanisms to strengthen co-ordination and structure follow-up activities, as well as a list of meetings to be held at various levels for the further development and implementation of the ND. These mechanisms were advanced through the 'Guidelines for a new Action Plan' during the Danish Presidency, and included in the second Action Plan.

Also the NDEP adopted at the Göteborg European Council and its Support Fund launched during the Danish Presidency highlight a new part of the decision-making procedures of the ND regime especially in terms of its financing, which facilitates the concrete implementation of joint projects. This, together with the agreed EIB lending action to projects in Russia during the Swedish Presidency, developed the

regime procedures in the ND in order to make concrete implementation of joint projects easier. This can also be seen as a modification of the procedures and rules within the composite regime. The Swedish promotion of the Northern eDimension and the initial steps taken during the Danish Presidency to launch a 'Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing' also illustrate the developing of new decision-making procedures within the ND regime.⁴⁸

Another example of the Swedish and Danish stress on decision-making procedures was the attention given to the interoperability and co-ordination of the procedures for EU financial instruments of relevance for the ND process, which also would contribute to a more efficient implementation. The conclusion of the MNEPR agreement would also make the implementation of the ND regime more effective; an issue that was emphasised by all three presidencies but not reached until the spring of 2003.

The *rules* of the ND can be considered rather implicit during the three Presidency periods in focus. During the Finnish Presidency, the absence of ministers at the First Foreign Ministers' Conference can be seen as a case of social sanctions towards Russia's activities in Chechnya. During the Danish Presidency, the Russian disapproval of the 'Guidelines' and its decision only to participate as an observer at the Third Foreign Ministers' Conference, can to a lesser extent be seen as case of social sanctions involved; in this case *vis-à-vis* Denmark's position towards Sakajev and the Chechen World Congress, and not directly towards the ND regime as such.

⁴⁸ The new decision-making procedures introduced by the NDEP, the NeDAP and the NDPPS are compared below.

A stronger tool that was used during the Finnish Presidency in order to influence Russia to respect the common values of democracy and non-violence was the formal sanctions introduced through the Common Strategy on Russia and the TACIS programme.

The EU-Russia agreement on transit in relation to Kaliningrad included specific rules and obligations for both parties, which were promoted by the Danish Presidency. These can be seen as implicit in the Northern Dimension regime, as they are more directly related to one of the issue-areas involved. The MNEPR includes implicit ND regime rules, promoted by all three presidencies. The NDEP Support Fund, the NeDAP and the EIB lending action to projects in Russia include some more explicit ND regime rules.

1.3 Phase in the Regime Development Process

The ways in which the presidencies address and describe the issue-areas involved and their position *vis-à-vis* the regime components, regime actors and main addressees are significant for the general development of the regime, whilst simultaneously contributing to the deepening of the regime formation process. The Northern Dimension regime-building process started with the Finnish presentation of the concept in 1997, and was deepened in 1998 when it first became an EU initiative and in 2000 when the first Action Plan was presented. The process has continued throughout the three Presidency periods in focus, as all have contributed to the development of the regime through highlighting various regime components and

issue-areas, as described above. However, they touched upon various phases of the regime development process.

It has been discussed earlier that it is possible to identify a number of phases or steps in regime analysis as regards the development of the regime – the regime-building process – which seem to fit the development of the ND composite regime during the three presidencies in focus. These phases are regime formulation, regime implementation, regime reproduction and transformation.

The second approach to regime analysis besides regime-building – regime consequences and effectiveness – has not been the focus in this thesis as noted in Chapter III. However, it intervenes in some cases in the regime-building process as decisions on the further development of the regime often reflect the perception of its effectiveness and consequences.

In general terms, the Presidency possesses both national and supranational interests, motives and intentions that contribute to the definition, promotion, development and implementation of the ND regime. Hence, the national interests and priorities of the government as regards the development of the ND might have some general influence over the orientation of the regime development, at the same time as the actual time period for its term in office and the actual phase the ND is situated in the regime development process can affect the performance and activities of the Presidency as a regime actor.

In this study, it has become evident that in some cases the Presidency was more influenced by the actual phase of the regime development process and was given the

task to focus on the specific phase by previous EU decisions, than in other cases where the Presidency contributed to the new orientation of the regime-building process. Consequently, sometimes its room of manoeuvre seems larger, than when it has been delegated a task by earlier EU decisions. This also illustrates the Presidency's particular status as an actor with 'dual hats': to serve the general interest of the EU whilst having a particular opportunity to highlight some more national concerns.

Hence, the performance of the Presidency and its launched initiatives and activities depend both on decisions already taken among the EU institutions and on national interests it is trying to promote within the EU machinery. These two variables also explain variations between different presidencies in a certain policy approach.

1.3.1 Regime Formulation

The launch of the ND and the formulation of the regime was first and foremost dependent on the activities of one member-state, namely Finland. The regime formulation phase started with the first Finnish formulations of the initiative, continued as the ND was launched on the EU's agenda, and was concluded with the first steps taken towards an Action Plan. The ND was at the very beginning a Finnish initiative, which through an intensive marketing campaign was transformed into an EU-led initiative. Despite of its basis in a Finnish initiative, Finland had borrowed some of its elements from other cooperation schemes in Europe, namely the Baltic Sea Region Initiative, which included many Swedish concerns, the activities of the CBSS and the experiences drawn from the Barcelona Process.

The timing of its launch was based on Finland's own calculations and connected to some internal EU developments, namely to the 1996 decision that one should prioritise regional cooperation in Europe and, in particular, to Finland's forthcoming Presidency period.

There were two reasons behind the launch of the initiative before its Presidency term. *First*, as Finland would chair the Council for the first time it was considered particularly important to stress the promotion of the integration process and to represent the interests of the Union, rather than bringing up new issues of strong national concern that could be criticised.

Second, by launching the ND prior to its term in office, Finland could during its Presidency, as it at this time already would have become an EU initiative, focus on firmly establishing it on the Union's foreign policy agenda through various activities and by accentuating its entirety (the horizontal approach and the regime's composite character). As it was initiated some time before the Presidency term, the concept would have become a well-known concept among the other member-states and ripe for being firmly established on the EU's political agenda, as well as for becoming more deeply developed.

The ND regime formulation process was very much based on Finnish motives, interests and intentions, as well as on experiences from other cooperation schemes, as mentioned above. The EU presented Northern Dimension in 1998 is based on the Finnish initiative and is therefore very similar to this in terms of its regime

components, geographical focus, stressed regime actors and the included issue-areas. Finland defined the important characteristics of the regime, which later were transformed into a Union approach. This illustrates its significance for the very formulation of the regime.

Also the other member-states had the opportunity to bring up issues and elements they found important in the regime formulation process through the internal EU decision-making process. Still, the EU's ND is more or less identical to the launched Finnish initiative, although focusing more on the Baltic Sea region and less on the 'High North'.

The non-EU partner countries had a limited role at the early stages of the regime formulation process. They were not invited to present their own preferences until once the ND had become an EU initiative in 1998. This is however also logical as the ND constitutes an EU-led regime; a regime dependent on the organisation of the European Union. The first real opportunity for them to bring up their interests in the field was at the first Foreign Ministers' Conference in 1999. This conference consequently represents a very important step in the regime formulation process – perhaps even its nucleus – as it for the first time brought together all the ND partners at equal footing, all were given the means to influence the further direction of the initiative and all agreed on the value of a Northern Dimension. The Conference meant that the ND composite regime formally was accepted and recognised by all its participants.

Hence, the focus of the Finnish Presidency was on regime formulation, or the firm establishment of the regime on the EU's foreign policy agenda. This Finnish approach also explains the undertaken activities and achievements during the Presidency period.

First, it was seen as imperative to draw attention to the entire initiative and its horizontality, and not to single out a limited number of issue-areas. A great number of issue-areas were illuminated. This would strengthen the role of the Commission, which was seen as vital for the continuation of the ND, especially when other states than Nordic ones were chairing the Council. This Finnish approach strengthens the composite character of the ND regime.

Second, the convened first Foreign Ministers' Conference was a highly prioritised event by Finland, which would contribute to the needed approval and support from all the ND partner countries for the composite regime. Its closure therefore represents an important step in the regime formulation process. This can also be seen as the main decision-making procedure in the regime that Finland emphasised.

Third, Finland drew attention to the regime principles and norms, as well as the definition of issue-areas, which also goes hand in hand with its regime formulation focus. This, as principles and norms provide the basic defining characteristics of a regime. They define the nature of the issue-areas involved and constitute the normative framework of a regime, which assist the actors in their formulation of the regime, and their emphasis on and definition of various issue-areas. As noticed above, Finland was behind the initial formulation of the included principles, norms,

procedures and rules as well as the scope of issue-areas involved. These were later transformed into a Union approach and have been further developed and shaped throughout the regime-building process. The concrete implementation of the regime was given less attention by Finland, which can be explained by the regime's juvenile character.

Fourth, it is, however, also vital in the process of regime formulation to consider the ways in which the regime should be implemented. The lack of any substantial ideas on how the regime should be implemented in concrete terms would seriously weaken the regime. Consequently, the Presidency also found it important to prepare the ground for the ways in which the ND regime would be implemented through a Northern Dimension Action Plan.

To sum up, Finland was behind the regime formulation phase of the regime-building process, although having borrowed some elements from other cooperation schemes in Europe. Even if the regime formulation process started prior to the Presidency, Finland chose to focus on this and on the firm establishment of the ND on the EU's external relations' agenda. A part of this strategy was also to give attention to the ways in which the ND could be implemented. Thus, once the first Foreign Ministers' Conference had been concluded, the next task was to prepare the ground for a first Action Plan. Consequently, the Finnish Presidency also contributed to the initial steps of the regime implementation phase.

1.3.2 Regime Implementation

As previously discussed, the regime components of regime decision-making procedures and rules can together be seen as the instrumental part of regimes. They prescribe actions to be taken and constitute practices for making and implementing collective choice with the ambition to meet the principles, norms and the general objectives of the regime. These are often stressed in the regime implementation phase.

The initial steps of the implementation phase of the ND composite regime were taken already during the Finnish Presidency, although its concrete opening coincided with the official launch of the Action Plan at the Feira European Council. One of the most important outcomes of the first Foreign Ministers' Conference was that all its participants recognised unanimously the need to draw up an Action Plan in order for the ND to be given a more concrete content and to move to its implementation phase. The Helsinki European Council delegated the task to the Commission to prepare an Action Plan. It was intended that the Action Plan should be adopted at the Feira European Council in June 2000, which also was the case.

The Action Plan can be seen as the last step of the preparatory process within the EU – regime formulation process – and the official opening of the implementation phase of the ND, which occurred only six months after the closure of the Finnish Presidency. As the Action Plan was based on the first Foreign Ministers' Conference and belonging to one of the Finnish priorities for the ND area, Finland had an opportunity to influence its content in accordance with national preferences.

When Sweden took over the Presidency function in early 2001, the Action Plan had recently been endorsed by the Feira European Council. This adoption and the opening of the ND implementation phase influenced the Swedish room of manoeuvre and its chosen focus in the area of the ND during its Presidency term. Consequently, the main task for Sweden was to concentrate on filling the ND basket with concrete content and to contribute to the implementation of the Action Plan so that the common values of security, stability and sustainable development could be strengthened. However, as previously noticed, Swedish lobbying efforts on the Commission and the Portuguese Presidency in view of its Presidency term were very much behind the three emphasised issue-areas for prioritised action included in the Action Plan.

Hence, the Swedish focus was on the regime implementation stage in the regime development process, and its efforts in order to fill the ND with concrete achievements were noticeable through a number of activities during its Presidency term. These contributed to the foundation of the implementation phase of the ND regime.

First, this focus gives some explanation to the Presidency strategy to put a limited number of ND issue-areas at the centre of attention, which arguably would make achievements and results in the chosen fields easier to attain and to detect. In accordance with the Feira Action Plan, Sweden focused its actions in the three areas of environmental protection, the fight against organised crime and the situation of Kaliningrad.

The Swedish focus on a limited number of issue-areas can be seen as weakening the composite character of the regime, which explains some Finnish hesitance towards this approach. Finland was afraid that the important role of the Commission for the continuation of the ND process – especially in periods when Nordic member-states did not have the Presidency function – would be damaged. This view was, however, different from the Swedish one. Just like Finland, Sweden also stressed the significant role of the Commission for the general development of the ND, and one of its ambitions was to ensure the continuation of the ND process after its term in office. This was not seen as being damaged by a narrow focus on involved issue-areas.

The most important achievements during the Swedish Presidency that contributed to the initiative's concretisation and implementation were the opening up of EIB loans for projects in Northwest Russia, the establishment of the NDEP and the launch of the Northern *e*Dimension.

Second, also the focus of the Second Foreign Ministers' Conference was to concentrate on the concrete implementation of the Action Plan, and in accordance with this aim, to establish efficient implementation, review and follow-up procedures. Such procedures were established through the 'Full Report' on the ND, prepared by the Swedish Presidency. The Full Report further drew attention to concrete results and ongoing activities, and mapped out future lines of action for the timeframe of the Action Plan. Through the listed mechanisms in the report for the implementation of ND activities and for cooperation in prioritised fields, as well as

the stated recommendations for further actions, the foundations of the implementation phase of the Northern Dimension regime became strengthened, much thanks to Swedish efforts.

Third, the focus on the concrete implementation of the ND also explains the extended Swedish emphasis on the general decision-making procedures of the ND regime. These were stressed throughout the Presidency term, whilst less attention was given to the involved principles and norms. As we have seen in the previous section, during the Swedish Presidency term, the procedures became both developed and modified, which can be considered an internal change of the 'composite policy regime'. The launched NDEP, the EIB lending action to projects in Russia and the development of the Northern eDimension together developed and shaped new decision-making procedures within the ND regime, which contribute to a more efficient implementation of joint projects.

Also the attention given to the interoperability and co-ordination of the procedures for EU financial instruments of relevance for the ND and the Swedish proposal to establish a division of labour between the Commission and the regional organisations involved, shows the Swedish stress on decision-making procedures. This, as such accomplishments would contribute to a more efficient implementation of joint projects in order to facilitate the realisation of common values and objectives. Also the conclusion of the MNEPR, a topic much promoted by Sweden, would contribute in this direction.

Although not being its sole focus, the Danish Presidency gave attention to the implementation phase of the ND as it prepared the ground for a new Action Plan,

which is the main document for the implementation of the ND and for making it more concrete. Denmark had been given the task by previous EU decisions to establish Guidelines for the new ND Action Plan. Consequently, this Danish focus can be explained by the development of the ND regime. It had already been decided at the formulation of the first Action Plan that after its ending in 2003, a new should be considered. The Danish Presidency happened to take place when the new Action Plan was to be prepared. However, it is not only the timing of the Danish Presidency that explains this focus. The preparations of the new Action Plan were also in Denmark's interests.

In order to prepare for the new Action Plan, Denmark organised a Third Foreign Ministers' Conference, which was concluded with the 'Guidelines for a new Action Plan'. The Conference marked the beginning of the work on the new Action Plan. The second Action Plan, which was presented only six months after the closure of the Danish Presidency, is based on the Guidelines and is very similar to this document. As Denmark prepared the formulation of and wordings in the Guidelines in its role as Presidency it had a particular possibility to influence the content of the new Action Plan, its prioritised areas for action and its geographical focus. The fact that the new Action Plan highlights the importance of having adequate and timely mechanisms for monitoring progress, reviewing achievements and identifying shortcomings, and presents some concrete proposals in this perspective, contributes to the concrete implementation of the ND.

Another activity during the Danish Presidency, aimed at contributing to the implementation phase, was the stress on a division of labour between the

Commission and regional bodies involved. This idea became even more tangible than during the Swedish Presidency. Denmark also contributed to the question of transit between the region of Kaliningrad and mainland Russia. Moreover, the Support Fund of the NDEP was launched through a pledging conference which, however, only happened to take place during the Danish Presidency. This, together with the initial steps to launch the NDPPS can illustrate the developing of new decision-making procedures and rules within the ND regime, which took place during the Presidency term. Also the promotion of an increased co-ordination of the PHARE, TACIS and INTERREG programmes, and the support for a conclusion of the MNEPR can be explained by the Danish focus on the implementation phase of the ND regime.

The implementation phase of the ND can also give some explanation to why Denmark found it important to have a restricted number of priorities and issue-areas in the new Action Plan – a strategy similar to the Swedish one – and to concentrate on a limited number of key activities. This would give precedence to deliverable results and concrete achievements.

To sum up, it seems possible to argue that whilst Finland had chosen also to illuminate the first steps of the implementation phase of the ND in order to strengthen the foundations of the regime in accordance with its particular national preferences, Sweden and Denmark were more or less given the task to have this focus as the implementation phase of the ND already had been launched. The phase of the regime development process – determined by earlier EU decisions – consequently influenced the orientation and focus of the Swedish and Danish

presidencies. As the role of the Presidency is to represent the interest of the Union and to promote the general integration process, it has to adapt to already decided topics, which seems evident in the case of the Swedish and Danish presidencies. Moreover, as the ND already was firmly established on the EU's foreign policy agenda it was easier for Sweden and Denmark to focus upon the concrete implementation of joint projects and to have a more restricted view on the number of issue-areas involved, than was the case for Finland. Through this focus, their intention was to contribute to the realisation of the common values and objectives of the regime. Finally, the fact that decision-making procedures and implicitly also rules were stressed in various ways also fits the implementation phase of the ND. This, as these procedures in general terms prescribe actions to be taken and constitute instruments for making and implementing collective choice so that the principles, norms and the general objectives of the regime are attained.

1.3.3 Partial Regime Reproduction

Whilst the Danish concentration on the implementation of the ND had been determined by earlier EU decisions, it was Denmark's own preferences that contributed to certain aspects of regime reproduction in connection to its Presidency term. One of Denmark's main ambitions for the ND was to integrate it into the Wider Europe initiative, and to apply the experiences drawn from the ND to this broader proximity policy. Denmark stressed over and over again that the successful framework for regional and cross-border cooperation which the ND represented, could be applicable in other regional contexts as well, in particular towards the EU's post-enlargement new neighbours.

Through integrating the ND into the Wider Europe initiative, one could risk losing the independent status and originality of the ND, despite the fact that the Council explicitly has expressed that there is no intention to replace it with the new proximity policy. Still, Denmark chose to have this as its main ambition. The most important reason for this was that Denmark wanted to ensure the continuity of the ND process after its term in office when it would take several years before the next potential Nordic Presidency, in 2006. Danish officials believed that the development of the ND was dependent on a Nordic Presidency. Although being an ambition of the other two Nordic presidencies as well, Denmark chose a rather different move to achieve this compared to its neighbours. If the ND were integrated in a general Union framework towards all its post-enlargement neighbours that do not have a membership perspective, its continuation would be secured. However, important aspects of the ND could be lost, namely its unique character of including both EU-members, candidate countries and different categories of non-EU members (both EFTA countries and Russia) as equal participants. The ND would be a part of the new initiative only through its partner Russia and whilst the ND constitutes an EU-led initiative that includes several non-EU actors, the developing proximity policy would be an explicit EU policy.

In the Commission's Communication on 'Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours', presented only a few months after the closure of the Danish Presidency, the ND is indeed mentioned. There are further several similarities between this initiative and the ND. The Wider Europe initiative has recaptured many of the elements of the ND. Among

these belong the challenges one attempts to address (mainly of a soft-security character), the goals, principles and values (increased security, stability and sustainable development), the indicated areas of cooperation, the important principle of cross-border cooperation, the intended increased interoperability between the EU's financial instruments, and the initiative's anticipated implementation through action plans, as well as its proposed consultative approach in relation to these. This can be seen as an example of an implicit and partial regime reproduction. Many, but not all, of the principles and norms of the ND have in a sense been 'exported' to the Wider Europe initiative, although not explicitly stated in the Communication.

It also mentions that some parts of the new neighbours initiative could draw from the experiences of the Northern Dimension and its NDEP, which can be seen as a more explicit case of partial regime reproduction; here, also with a focus on some of the procedures and rules involved.

However, the ND is not explicitly included as a part of the developing proximity policy in the Communication and as being a model for the Wider Europe initiative as such. Nevertheless, it is mentioned as being a potential model for a selected part of the Wider Europe initiative, namely the Western NIS. Instead of recapitulating the cooperation model of the ND, the EEA model of cooperation and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership are seen as influential designs for the Wider Europe initiative.

Denmark did not succeed in a concrete regime reproduction, namely to base the new developing proximity policy on the ND cooperation model. However, it contributed to a partial regime reproduction in that many of the elements of the proximity policy

are more or less identical to those in the ND, as the NDEP is explicitly mentioned as a useful model for other regions as well, and as the model of cooperation of the ND can be applicable for a part of the Wider Europe initiative, namely in the relations towards Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

To sum up, the Danish Presidency contributed to a partial regime reproduction, namely to apply parts of the ND cooperation model in another regional context. The ND is further at least partly integrated in the Wider Europe initiative, which was another Danish ambition in order to ensure its continuity. It seems as if this Danish Presidency strategy is based on its own particular preferences for the development of the ND, rather than being a consequence of earlier EU decisions.

However, the actual phase of the regime-building process the ND was located in at the time for the Presidency might have influenced the Danish decision. Perhaps the ND model of cooperation was perceived as sufficiently developed and well-functioning, which was ripe for being applied in other regional contexts as well. In addition, the recent development of the Wider Europe initiative as such probably influenced the Danish strategy.

Regime reproduction is common when the regime is perceived as efficient. It is therefore easy to assume that this was the case. However, this would probably be a premature conclusion. Even if a cooperation model is functioning, this does not mean that the regime is competent in addressing the challenges in the region in an efficient way.

1.3.4 Aspects of Regime Transformation

As previously noted, if the ND regime is seen as ineffective, if it does not change the behaviour of the actors, if the circumstances linked to its establishment alter (such as the enlargement), or if the external challenges are disappearing, the regime might be transformed. During the regime-building process, the decision-making procedures and rules of the ND have evolved and there have been some minor changes in this field due to the development of the ND regime, which have been described earlier in this chapter. These can be seen as changes *within* the regime. However, if the principles, goals or norms of the regime are modified, this affects the status of the regime and contributes to its transformation.

An additional Danish ambition to those analysed above, which also concurred with the interest of the Commission, was to adapt the ND to the changes that would occur with the eastward enlargement. During its Presidency term, Denmark underlined the need for a certain adjustment of the objectives, priorities and activities of the ND regime so that it would fit the post-enlargement Union. The Danish government emphasised the value of a deeper concentration on clear strategic objectives, goals and priorities within each of the key issue-areas of the ND. This can be seen as a Danish attempt to some extent transform at least a part of the regime as an effect of the changing circumstances the enlargement represents.

In the second Action Plan there are indeed some changes in the ND regime; changes that were supported both by the Danish Presidency and the Commission as is visible through their joint paper from July 2002. The old principles and values of the

Northern Dimension – security and stability – are not listed in the new Action Plan. Instead, the new focus and main principle in the regime seems to be sustainable development. Its main objective is to enhance the relations to Northwest Russia at all levels, which can be considered a strengthened principle in the new Action Plan, and to address challenges and issues that are related to the enlargement. This can be seen as some aspects of regime transformation as its principles are modified.

Earlier, also the four candidate countries and non-EU Nordic countries were considered important partner countries. The focus is now entirely on Russia (Interviewee 5, 24/02/2003). This new focus can be explained by the coming member-status of the four candidate countries in the region. The fact that the other non-EU members are not mentioned at all in this context strengthens even more the enhanced focus on Northwest Russia.

Hence, the adaptation of the ND to the actual enlargement can be seen as the reason behind a certain reformation and modification of the Northern Dimension regime, which Denmark contributed to. The ND was launched with the 1995 enlargement in perspective. Denmark represented the last Nordic Presidency before the coming 2004 enlargement, which will change the perspective of the ND.

Also the Danish ambition to integrate the ND in the Wider Europe initiative can be seen as an example of a certain transformation of the regime. The differences between the two approaches also gives support to this Danish attempt to somewhat transform the regime in terms of its actual status and orientation. If the developing proximity policy evolves substantially in the coming years, the ND might actually be

transformed into a 'composite sub-regime', within the broader and more heterogeneous 'composite policy regime' of the new proximity policy. Yet, this is currently not the case because of the early days of the Wider Europe initiative, and the existing different characteristics of this compared to the ND. In addition, this initiative has not yet received the same positive response by the important partner country Russia as is the case for the ND and its developed partner-oriented approach (Interviewee 18, 24/09/2003).

To sum up, a Danish priority that also corresponded with the Commission's interest was to adapt and modify the ND to the post-enlargement reality. Hence, some aspects of regime transformation can be noticeable if we see this as a change regarding the focus, orientation and circumstances behind the regime, whilst the regime principles and norms still may remain largely the same. There has, however, also been a slight modification in the focus of principles in the new Action Plan, which has sustainable development and strengthened relations to Northwest Russia at the centre of attention.

Also the regime development process may explain this Danish focus. As the enlargement would be a reality almost in time for the starting of the new Action Plan, this had to be adapted to post-enlargement circumstances, i.e., to the fact that four of the seven non-EU partner countries would during its time period have become member-states, at the same time as two of the remaining three in some cases already are seen as 'semi-members'. The country with the weakest link to the EU is consequently Russia.

1.4 Concluding Remarks

The three Nordic presidencies took the advantage of holding the position as chairman of the Council in order to prioritise certain aspects of the ND and the EU-Russia relations. In some cases, this influence on the Union's foreign policy agenda was rather extensive, whilst other matters related to the field of the ND were influenced by previous EU decisions or by certain unpredicted external events. Also the length of the Presidency period influenced the room of manoeuvre of the three governments. However, all three governments recognised the significance of a Nordic Presidency for the general development of the ND regime.

One can draw the conclusion that the Finnish Presidency was very active first and foremost in the regime formulation phase of the ND, but also as regards the initial steps of the implementation phase. Had Finland not had this as a special priority, the Action Plan would perhaps have been delayed.

Sweden was given the task to fill the ND basket with concrete results and to contribute to the implementation of the Action Plan. However, without the concrete willingness to act, the implementation of the ND through concrete initiatives would not have been as substantial as it became. In the evaluation of the Swedish Presidency, one valued the concrete achievements Sweden contributed to in this field, such as the NDEP, the Northern eDimension and the possible EIB loans to Russia.

Denmark inherited some tasks by earlier EU decisions, such as its duty to prepare the ground for a new Action Plan, which contributed to the Danish presidential focus on the regime implementation phase. This matter also seems to have concurred with Danish interests. An issue that the Danish Presidency contributed to without being explicitly encouraged by earlier EU decisions was a certain degree of regime reproduction, namely applying selected parts of the ND regime in the promoted Wider Europe initiative. The Danish success in this field was, as we have seen, only partial.

It was further a clear Danish strategy to focus on the integration of the ND within the Wider Europe initiative in order to ensure its continuity on the EU's agenda. The changing circumstances behind the very existence of the ND regime, namely the actual enlargement that would occur not long after the end of the Presidency, and the development of the Wider Europe initiative, had some tangible effects on the government's focus. Hence, Denmark, encouraged by the Commission, also contributed to some aspects of regime transformation. A certain change in the focus, principles and priorities of the ND regime was supported by the Danish Presidency and later became included in the second Action Plan, whilst the norms remained more or less the same.

The actual phase of the regime development process had in some cases a strong influence on the focus and activities of the chairing member-state. In other cases, it seems as if the strategy of the member-state actually accelerated the development of the regime into a new phase. However, the priorities of the Presidency sometimes concur with those of the Commission, which makes it a little difficult to clearly

discern the impact of the Presidency focus and interests for the development of the ND.

2. INTERNATIONAL REGIME THEORY AND THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENCY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EU FOREIGN POLICY APPROACH – APPLICABILITY AND VALUE

2.1 Defining the Northern Dimension as an EU-led ‘Composite Policy Regime’

In this study, the Northern Dimension has been labelled an EU-led ‘composite policy regime’ of a multidimensional nature. The ND is often depicted as a ‘process’ (an emphasised concept by the Danish Presidency); in this study and elsewhere. Is such an evolving initiative compatible with an international regime approach? I argue that it is, especially since the attention has been drawn to the regime-building process. Furthermore, the main aim has not been to equate the ND process with a full-fledged and firmly established international regime in its traditional definition, but rather to lift out some features within the initiative that are comparable to those of an international regime. The ambition with my definition has been to illuminate the international regime aspects embedded in the ND coupled to its rather unique characteristics, whilst simultaneously recognising and highlighting its particular nature as being an initiative on the EU’s foreign policy agenda. In time, the ND might develop into a more firmly established regime than is the case today.

The ND regime encompasses a great number of issue-areas, which together constitute its composite character. A large number of actors are involved in its development and implementation, and a great number of EU policies are concerned, which together make the regime multidimensional. Nevertheless, the regime is dependent on the EU as it constitutes one of its foreign policy initiatives, which explains the superior role of EU actors in comparison to others for its very existence and development.

Through the framework of the ND certain common EU principles, norms, values and policies are exported to non-EU partner countries, at the same time as the country presiding the EU can export its own particular preferences both to other members and partner countries involved. The status of 'equal' non-EU partner countries, the important role given to regional organisations, and the fact that it focuses on common challenges, shared policies and values, as well as on jointly defined co-operation areas instead of differentiating between various kinds of countries in the region, makes a regime approach appealing and pertinent for the analysis of the ND.

Embedded in the composite concept used in this thesis is also the fact that a number of 'sub-regimes' might appear in the development of the regime. This seems to be the case in the ND. The NDEP and its Support Fund can be seen as one such developing sub-regime within the ND, which addresses one specific issue-area, one kind of common problem in the region, which has its own specific principles, priorities, decision-making procedures and funding approach that includes a set of rules. Another sub-regime under development is the NDPPS, similar to the NDEP,

but addressing another issue-area. A third initiative, which could develop into a sub-regime is the NeDAP, which however has a limited time-span.

How similar are these three potential sub-regimes in relation to the components of the ND composite regime? All three focus on the currently most important *principle* of the ND, namely cross-border cooperation in order to address common, mainly soft-security challenges in order to strengthen sustainable development. Especially the NDEP and the NDPPS focus on soft-security challenges (environmental and nuclear safety problems, and problems related to communicable diseases, human health and social wellbeing), whilst the NeDAP accentuates the second dynamic within the ND, namely to take advantage of the opportunities the region can provide, such as cooperation in the IT field.

They acknowledge the general regime *norms*, namely the importance of equal participation of the partner countries (much stressed by the NDPPS), and at least implicitly emphasise the value of avoiding new dividing-lines. All three have a particular focus on Northwest Russia, Russian active involvement, and Russia is seen as the most important partner country.

They have their own *decision-making procedures, rules* (more developed in the NDEP Support Fund and in the NeDAP), and funding mechanisms for the making and implementation of the initiatives.

Within the decision-making procedures, IFIs are important actors of the NDEP and in its Steering Group, whilst the NeDAP is coordinated by a group of Senior

Officials of the Information Society with observers from the business and research community, and was initially launched by representatives from the CBSS members and the Commission. The highest cooperation structure of the NDPPS is Partnership Annual Conferences, and a Committee of Senior Representatives is the regular coordination mechanism. The NeDAP and the NDPPS are headed by a presiding country (Sweden was the first in both initiatives), whilst the chair of the NDEP Steering Group and its Secretariat rotates among the IFIs. Also the NDPPS could establish a Secretariat function when considered necessary. The NDEP Support Fund further has an Assembly of Contributors, managed by the EBRD, which is a potential development also for the NDPPS.

The funding mechanism of the NeDAP and the NDPPS include national, bilateral or multilateral financing. However, the establishment of a voluntary Partnership Fund, managed by an IFI, like the one in the NDEP, will be considered in the NDPPS.

IFIs seem to be the most significant actors in the NDEP. In the NeDAP, states play an important role. The NDPPS seems to be in an intermediate position as both states and IFIs participated at its founding meeting. It has further the broadest partner scope of the three, expanding beyond the geographical focus of the ND, whilst the NeDAP and the NDEP include actors first and foremost geographically situated in the region.

The three initiatives highlight the multi-actor approach involved in the ND regime: the NDEP was established on a proposal by an IFI, the NeDAP by a regional council and the NDPPS on an initiative from two Finnish ministries and a national research and development centre. They aim at launching a more structured and regular

cooperation, consultation and coordination between the actors involved, and to mobilise and combine financial resources and realise synergies when conditions are appropriate for investment in the three different issue-areas. They expect various actors such as IFIs, regional organisations, governmental institutions, business, research communities and the European Commission to participate.

However, instead of studying one or a few of these sub-regimes separately, the overall aim of this thesis has been to address the umbrella character of the ND composite regime and its embedded issue-areas and regime components, whilst being aware of its separate modules. Thus, the composite approach used in this thesis seems relevant.

In the concept of a 'composite policy regime', we have seen that it is possible to distinguish between the macro and meso level of policy. At the macro level, it is the foreign ministers and the Commissioner for External Relations, or the heads of government or state and the President of the Commission at the top of the decision-making hierarchy. Here, the overall objectives, broad framework and parameters of policy are described, including the direction for the relationship and the policy instruments (the policy framework and the range of policy-areas). In the ND, the foreign ministers and the Commissioner for External Relations are the most important actors in the main decision-making structure of the foreign ministers' conferences.

At the meso level, or the sub-regime level, it has become noticeable that the principal policy-makers are sectoral ones both in the Commission and the member-states, such

as ministers from different policy fields. The concrete implementation of the overall goals, principles and values of the composite regime often takes place at this meso level. What is relevant for the ND is to see how the common values of security, stability and sustainable development, the avoidance of new dividing-lines as well as the norm of equal participation are carried out at the practical level. This can give us an explanation of the fact that when the implementation phase of the ND has been in the spotlight, the relevant presidencies have focused upon concrete achievements in some of these meso policies, and sub-regimes have been promoted.

These meso policies are simultaneously parts of other EU policy areas and share their instruments in order to achieve the overall objectives. This can be seen as various existing EU instruments in different policy areas are aimed to come into use for the development of the ND.

Meso policy elements are particularly visible as regards the NeDAP and the NDPPS, as sectoral policy-makers from participating states took part at their founding meetings (and for the NeDAP, also Commission representatives). In addition, EU programmes and financial instruments are available for the NeDAP. However, also the NDEP involves such meso policy characteristics. So far, in the Steering Group, Russian representatives have come from the Ministry of Finance, and the reports of the Steering Group should be sent to EU sectoral ministers. EIB loans are also a possibility. However, the conference launching the Support Fund was co-chaired by the Commissioner for External Relations, the Russian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and the President of the EBRD.

Although existing meso policies or sub-regimes, it is still possible to discern overall regime elements, valid for all the distinct issue-areas and which fit the composite character of the ND framework regime. This has been the approach in this study.

In addition to its composite character, the labelling of the ND an 'EU policy regime' also seems appropriate, as the characteristics of an EU policy regime in Wallace's definition has many similarities with the ND. Such a policy regime refers to cooperation in a specific issue-area that poses a cross-border challenge, engages a variety of other regional bodies and could involve both EU-members and non-members, which is the case of the ND. However, my approach addresses many issues.

An analysis of the characteristics of the ND in relation to Krasner's consensus definition of international regimes from the early 1980s, has proven useful, but has also included some difficulties. Some of the regime components seem stronger than others in the ND, and they are rather difficult to clearly separate. Throughout the three empirical case studies, the regime principles and norms can be seen as more explicit than the decision-making procedures and rules. Especially the regime rules are often of an implicit nature and therefore rather difficult to detect.

However, this does not make a regime approach invalid. One of the very characteristics of international regimes is the acknowledged variation in terms of their components; and the overlap between various regime components is widely recognised. It is also common practice for regime analysts to emphasise one element of Krasner's definition at the expense of another. Moreover, the ambition has not been to equate the ND with a traditional and fully developed international regime;

rather to draw attention to some of its regime characteristics. Hence, instead of giving an unambiguous and straightforward categorisation of various elements of the ND into different groups of regime components, some ND elements have been highlighted, which might be described as various types of regime components.

My approach can also be legitimised by the advance taken by Xenakis (see Chapter III), who conceptualises the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as an embryonic multidimensional international regime, which also involves many issue-areas. Whilst his regime remains weak in relation to the development of explicit norms, but offers some general rules, the ND seems to be stronger as regards the principles, whilst the rules are more implicit. In addition, my 'composite policy regime' approach contributes to the alteration of the traditional focus of regime theory on just one issue-area.

2.2 Various Phases in Regime Analysis and the Role of the Rotating Presidency

An adapted version of regime analysis has been used in order to shed light to an EU policy approach towards a neighbouring region and to the actors that have been influential for its formulation, development and implementation. Regime theory has been applied to a selected part of the EU, namely to one of its foreign policy initiatives, and to the role of the Presidency of the Council, which is seen as important for the general development of the regime.

2.2.1 The Actorness of the Presidency in the Development of a Regime on the EU's Foreign Policy Agenda

Among all the actors involved in the regime-building process of the ND, the focus in this study has been on the seemingly most prominent one, namely the EU Presidency. As the ND is an EU-led initiative, it is logical that EU actors have more influence on its development process, than non-EU actors, despite the fact that it constitutes a 'partner-oriented' approach.

Throughout the study it has become evident that the rotating EU Presidency possesses a very useful, and perhaps also needed, leadership role for the development of an international regime on the EU's foreign policy agenda. We have seen that the four main functions of the rotating Presidency – administration and management, policy-initiation and agenda-shaping, consensus-building and mediation, and representation – together give the country presiding the Union a particular opportunity to influence and shape the EU's foreign policy agenda in line with its own national preferences for the further orientation of the integration process. This influence might be composed of the promotion of particular national priorities and the development of common EU concerns. Some matters on the list of Presidency priorities are of a more national concern, shaped and defined along with a general basis in the country's national foreign policy, and others of a more general European interest based in the progress of the integration process.

Despite the fact that the Commission and the recently inaugurated High Representative have advanced their positions in the field of external relations, the

rotating Presidency still constitutes the most important EU actor in the intergovernmental field. The various roles of different EU actors are noticeable in the field of the ND. As regards the concrete implementation of the Action Plan and the use of Community instruments, the position of the Commission is significant, and it therefore becomes important for the Presidency to co-operate with it in order to increase its chances to influence the agenda. However, when it comes to its intergovernmental features such as the Common Strategy on Russia, the PCA and the foreign ministers' conferences, the Presidency has a prominent role to play. Moreover, as the focus throughout the thesis has been on the framing of various interests, values, principles and norms involved, the Presidency with its particular position as representing the EU at the same time as it possesses a special opportunity to bring up more national concerns, has been a pertinent focus.

However, it is important to be aware of the fact that in many cases it is difficult to establish the full extent of the promotion of national interests during a Presidency term, as many of the presented priorities are compatible with the majority view, or the opinion of the Commission. Especially the concordance in views and interests of the Presidency and the Commission has been visible *vis-à-vis* the three countries in focus. For instance, the Swedish Foreign Minister published a joint article with the Commissioner for External Relations on ND priorities just days before the beginning of the Swedish Presidency period. The Danish government together with the Commission published a document on the future of the ND in the early days of the Danish Presidency term. Many of the ideas within this document were included both in the 'Guidelines' and in the second Action Plan.

In this context it is perhaps important to underline that the intention has not been to give the specific presiding country all the credit for the development of the ND during its six months in office. In some cases it has been rather difficult to establish whether the Presidency or other actors have been behind the new orientation of the regime in the overall regime-building process. For instance, the phase of regime implementation and regime transformation have been promoted both by the Presidency and the Commission. This study has rather drawn attention to how the regime has developed during three selected Presidency periods. In some cases, the relevant Presidency contributed in very concrete terms to the general development of the ND and its concrete achievements. In other cases, other actors have contributed to perceived achievements and the new orientation of the regime during the actual Presidency period.

It has become evident that it is common practice for presidencies to promote and give attention to the EU's external relations in which they have a particular national interest. Member-states often tend to promote regional initiatives towards their own neighbours when chairing the Union more than members located further away from the geographical area. This can be explained by the simple fact that these member-states often are more directly affected by potential challenges that exist in the neighbouring region and can benefit in more concrete terms from the substance of constructive relations to these countries. They often have more pronounced national interests in the region at hand and in many cases already established relations with countries in the area, and in general they possess a specific knowledge of the region's characteristics. This phenomenon can be seen through the development of the Barcelona Process, which was initiated by the Presidency of a member-state in the

region. During the Presidency periods of southern member-states, its development has been speeded up and deepened.

Also the ND can be seen from this perspective. Its development has been more advanced during the Presidency periods of the three Nordic states, than when other member-states have been in office. For instance, the important decision-making procedure of recurrent foreign ministers' conferences have so far only been held in connection to a Nordic Presidency. An important element for the functioning of a negotiated regime is to have a strong leadership that organises the regime on a regular basis. Also in these terms, the Nordic presidencies stand out as they have shouldered the role of organising the regime – through foreign ministers' conferences and other meetings – on a regular basis. Through these activities, they have given active guidance to the Commission in the preparation and implementation of the Action Plans. Consequently, the leadership role of the Nordic member-states *vis-à-vis* the ND regime has been rather clear.

In addition, other apparent evidence of this Nordic influence on the ND can be seen through their own considerations. Through interviews and the analysis of various produced documents from the three Nordic states, it has become visible that Finland, Sweden and Denmark, together with the Commission representatives dealing with the ND, all agree that the deepening and development of the ND regime is more or less dependent on the Presidency function of one of the three Nordic countries. This view explains the great expectations especially the Finns, who were behind the very launch of the initiative, had on first the Swedish and later the Danish Presidency. Indeed, on the Commission's website on the Northern Dimension, most of the

documents produced in relation to this were during the Presidency periods of the three Nordic states. This also explains the fact that one of the most important priorities of all three presidencies under scrutiny was to ensure the persistence of the ND on the EU's foreign policy agenda also after their term in office. The most recent case was the Danish intention, for this reason, to integrate the ND within the Wider Europe initiative.

The focus on the *regime-building process* seems appropriate for a number of reasons in comparison to the second dominating option, *regime effectiveness and consequences*.

First, this approach suits my treatment of the Presidency as an important actor in the formulation and development of an initiative on the EU's foreign policy agenda. The focus on the priorities, activities and concrete achievements of the Presidency that contribute to the development of a regime, suits the regime-building approach, which highlights the role of agents in the general development of a structure (regime).

Second, the ND can be seen as an ongoing process and as a rather juvenile initiative, which makes it difficult at this stage to discern and evaluate all its potential effects for actors' behaviour and concrete results. Further, it is not easy at this point to once and for all establish whether it can be seen as efficient or whether perceived changes in the region would have happened also without its very existence. This is only possible in a longer term perspective.

A number of steps or phases have been identified in the process of regime-building, which seem apt for the analysis of the role of the Presidency in the development of

an EU external relations' approach. These steps have proven suitable for the focus in this study on the three selected presidencies. Nevertheless, I would like to stress that if the study had addressed another regime, other actors or other presidencies, it is possible that other steps would have been more relevant. In addition, although depicted as sequential phases in Chapter III, we have seen in this study that there are some overlaps between them in the regime-building process, meaning that a Presidency may be active in and promote a few phases simultaneously.

The identified steps in the regime-building process in connection to the role of the Presidency as an important regime actor, have been fruitful in the definition of variations of approaches and activities during the three selected Presidency periods. In some cases, we have seen that the Presidency had an important influence over the orientation of the regime-building process based on its own national interests, priorities and values. In other cases, the room of manoeuvre of the Presidency to influence the very orientation of the ND was more limited due to previous EU decisions and the actual phase the regime was situated in at the time for the relevant Presidency. Consequently, the performance of the Presidency and its launched initiatives and activities depend both on decisions already taken among the EU institutions and on national interests it is trying to promote within the EU machinery through its position as chairman. These two variables also explain variations between different presidencies when compared.

Through the comparison of three presidencies within the same time interval, it is possible to analyse different phases of the development and regime-building process of the ND composite regime, and to discern variations in their definitions of and focus on various issue-areas, actors involved and regime components. How their

approach and activities affect the overall composite character of the regime have also been possible to establish.

2.2.2 Phase in the Regime-Building Process and Focus on Issue-Areas and Regime Components

In Chapter III, it was argued that one can expect the Presidency as a regime actor in the framework of a composite regime to behave in a particular manner in relation to the regime components and issue-areas involved depending on the actual phase of the regime-building process. In the phase of *regime formulation*, the regime actors were expected to focus on the horizontal dimension – the composite character – in order to give prominence to the totality of issue-areas involved. The nature of the issue-areas involved would be important to define, and the defining characteristics of the regime would be highlighted – the principles and norms – whilst the decision-making procedures and rules could be less emphasised.

These characteristics are indeed visible regarding the Finnish Presidency, which focused on regime formulation – the firm establishment of the ND on the EU's foreign policy agenda. As we have seen in the first part of this chapter, Finland drew attention to the horizontal approach, and consequently highlighted the totality of the issue-areas involved. Finland also emphasised the defining characteristics of the regime during its Presidency period, whilst the decision-making procedures and rules were less stressed.

As regards the phase of *regime implementation*, the argument was that one could expect the regime actors to give strong emphasis to the decision-making procedures and rules of the regime, as these components assist in and can be seen as instruments for the concretisation of the regime. In order to facilitate the delivery of concrete results in ways of implementing the regime, a strategy could be to limit the number of issue-areas in focus, with potential weakening effects on the composite character of the regime. As the regime at this stage already has become an established practice, one might decide to focus less on the defining characteristics of the regime.

The Swedish and Danish presidencies were active when the implementation phase of the ND had been launched. Both had a more limited focus on the issue-areas involved, compared to the Finnish strategy. This was perhaps especially the case for Sweden, whilst the number of issue-areas emphasised by Denmark also can be explained by its involvement in other phases of the regime development process (see below). During the two presidencies, especially the decision-making procedures, but to some extent also the rules, were developed and expanded, in some cases thanks to Swedish and Danish efforts. The Swedish and Danish priorities, activities and concrete achievements – perhaps particularly evident for Sweden – can be seen as meeting those initial expectations on the presidential behaviour in the phase of regime implementation.

In addition to the Danish input to the implementation of the ND regime, the government contributed to a partial *reproduction* and to some aspects of *regime transformation*. The fact that the Danish government had several ambitions with its Presidency term, which led to its contribution to three different phases of the regime

development process, makes an analysis regarding regime reproduction and transformation more complex than the previous phases. This is also due to the partial and only implicit nature of the initiations of these two phases. Had the Danish Presidency contributed to a concrete and explicit reproduction and a total transformation of the regime, the end results had probably been different from the ones presented in this section.

In Chapter III, it was argued that in this phase of the regime-building process one might expect, as is the case with the regime formulation phase, a stronger emphasis on the principles and norms concerned, as well as a wider focus on the number of issue-areas involved. The argument was based on the assumption that there are some similarities between the phases of regime reproduction and transformation, and that of regime formulation. Actors promoting a regime reproduction have the intention to build a new regime in another international setting, and if actors intend to transform the regime at hand, it becomes important to stress the defining characteristics of it. Hence, the focus would be on the regime principles and norms. In regime reproduction, these would constitute the defining characteristics of a new regime, and as regards regime transformation, an alteration of these components stands at its very basis. With this reasoning, regime rules and decision-making procedures could be less stressed.

However, as we have seen, the Danish focus was on a limited number of issue-areas; thus, not on the totality of them which was expected in this phase of the regime development process. An intention was even to limit the scope of the new ND to a selected number of key themes or issue-areas through the second Action Plan. This

Danish approach can be explained by its intention to adapt the ND to its post-enlargement reality, and to highlight the importance of delivering concrete results. Hence, the fact that Denmark touched upon several of the phases in the regime development process, gives an explanation to this Danish move.

As regards the regime principles and norms, these were to some extent stressed in relation to the Wider Europe initiative and *vis-à-vis* the intentions of transforming the ND to its new circumstances in the second Action Plan. The partial but explicit regime reproduction seen through the Wider Europe initiative is, however, based on the decision-making procedures within the ND regime, namely the NDEP and its Support Fund, whilst its implicit form is based on the principles and norms.

As regards regime transformation, we have seen that the regime principles indeed became a little altered: there is now increased attention drawn to sustainable development, cross-border cooperation and reinforced relations to Northwest Russia. The main focus here was on the principles and norms, although also the decision-making procedures became developed through the second Action Plan, which can be explained by the other Danish ambition to focus on concrete implementation.

The reasoning above can be illustrated by the following figure, which has been modified from the one presented in Chapter III:

Figure 2. *The three Nordic presidencies and their focus on various regime components and the number of issue-areas involved.*

	<i>Finnish Presidency (Regime Formulation)</i>	<i>Swedish and Danish presidencies (Regime Implementation)</i>	<i>Danish Presidency (Regime Reproduction and Transformation)</i>
Number of Issue-Areas	Many	Less	Less (many)
Principles and Norms	High	Less	High
Decision-Making Procedures and Rules	Less	High	Medium (less)

In sum, the Finnish Presidency, active in the first phase of the regime-building process, focused on a great number of issue-areas, it gave high attention to the principles and norms involved, but less consideration to the decision-making procedures and rules. The Swedish and Danish presidencies were both involved in the regime implementation phase, and emphasised a smaller number of issue-areas involved, gave less attention to the principles and norms, but a higher focus on the decision-making procedures and rules. However, Denmark also contributed to a partial regime reproduction and some aspects of regime transformation. Here, it emphasised a smaller number of issue-areas involved than was expected, it gave a stronger emphasis to the principles and norms (at least implicitly), and emphasised

the procedures and rules more than was expected. This can be explained by the fact that Denmark simultaneously focused on the concrete implementation of the ND.

2.3 General Perception of the Northern Dimension and Future

Development – Input for Further Studies

The performance of the Northern Dimension regime in relation to the behaviour of actors involved affects the further development of the initiative. If the ND is seen by the main actors as facilitating increased cooperation in the region, that it contributes to the efficient management of joint problems so that the common values of security, stability and sustainable development are strengthened, and that the establishment of new dividing-lines in Europe is avoided, it would probably continue to exist as a regime on the EU's foreign policy agenda. This would also be the case if the principal actors follow its regime principles and norms, and if the challenges for which it was established continue to exist in the region.

Regime effectiveness and consequences has not been a theme of this thesis, but it would be an interesting topic and a natural second step to take in the further analysis of the ND. There are many appealing questions to examine, such as whether the ND has led to concrete joint benefits in the region or if changes that have occurred would have happened also without its establishment; and if the ND has increased the position of Baltic Sea region cooperation within the framework of the EU, and as a consequence, whether more resources are directed towards this part of Europe since its launch. As we have seen in Chapter III, regimes with strong compliance

mechanisms are more expected to alter the behaviour of regime participants than regimes with weak monitoring, sanctioning and dispute-resolution procedures, which is the case in the ND. This fact probably has effects on the perceived effectiveness of the regime, and seems to be a relevant issue to address.

The central subject matter has not been to evaluate the position of Russia *vis-à-vis* the ND regime, although some important elements have been included in the analysis. However, this would be an appealing and important theme for further studies. As we have seen, Russia is the key partner country within the ND, and its position becomes even more significant with the enlargement as it will be the only country in the region without a concrete membership potential in the perceivable future. Moreover, it seems important in this concluding section to address some of the aspects that have become visible in the thesis regarding the Russian view; issues that can be more deeply assessed in further studies.

Russia has been very positive towards the 'partner-oriented' approach of the ND and its intended *equal participation* of non-EU members. It has also always had an interest in the *concrete financing of joint projects* in order to tackle common challenges; many of which with a Russian origin.

As regards the first topic, in a governmental document presented in January 2003, Russia states that

The input of ND partner countries and organisations seems to have fallen into a conceptual gap between two scenarios of ND development: as the sole “property” of the European Union, which sets its parameters and determines its fate, or, alternatively, as a framework of equal partnership of all its participants, where the choice and implementation of projects would be decided by consensus. Substantial contributions to the first Action Plan were collected according to the second scenario, whereas the final decision regarding their subsequent use was made according to the first one. (Government of the Russian Federation, 14/01/2003:2).

Russia has a great interest in having a formal and equal say in ND matters, and has been very supportive to ND partnerships such as the NDEP in which it sits at the same deciding table as EU members (see also Leshukov, 2001:135). However, Russia has been somewhat frustrated that the concept of ‘equal participation’ exists on paper, but to a lesser extent in concrete terms (see also Government of the Russian Federation, 17/02/2003). Although all partner countries have equal means to influence the discussions and further development of the ND through the foreign ministers’ conferences, the agendas of these have been put together by EU actors, and Russia does not have a formal say in the internal EU policy-making process as regards the ND, which is the case for member-states (see for instance Government of the Russian Federation, 14/01/2003:2-3). This also applies for the Community instruments involved which are important for the general implementation of the ND, such as the TACIS, PHARE and INTERREG programmes, the Common Strategy on Russia and the PCA. These instruments are developed and defined by the EU, and Russia is not treated as an equal partner here.

In relation to the second topic, Russia is of the view that in order to achieve concrete results, one must have an adequate financial support (Interviewee 24, 25/11/2003. See also Marin, 2003:46). Russia has always had a strong interest in the concrete funding of ND activities, and has expressed an interest in a specific EU budget line,

which is the case in the Barcelona Process. As long as this does not exist in the ND, Russia remains a little hesitant regarding its concrete contribution in addressing joint problems in the region. It is also important to understand the divergent positions of the EU and Russia. The EU is ready to contribute with financial resources once a concrete project has been presented. Russia, on its side, wants to see the concrete financial contribution before it launches a new project (Interviewee 18, 24/09/2003).

A third significant topic in the relationship between the central partner country and the EU is the question of an *export of common EU norms, values and policies*. There is probably a power element involved in the ND (a 'realist' aspect), which can be compared to the discussion in Chapter III on the social forces behind the formation of the regime. The ND is an EU-led initiative, which gives prominence to EU norms and standards. How does Russia respond to this? Again, it is important to stress the Russian view that although the ambition is to have an equal participation of all actors involved in the regime, Russia still feels not being entirely involved, not always listened to and that the EU member-states indeed have the final say. The challenges in the region have primarily been defined by EU actors and consequently illuminate common EU concerns. Russia might have other interests, which have not been given the same position in the initiative. Some have even seen the ND as a disguised neo-colonial approach in order for Western European countries to get hold on Russian gas resources for their increasing energy demands. It has further been criticised for its normative conditionality imposed in the sector of environmental protection and nuclear safety, as some financial aid has been linked to the Russian ratification of the MNEPR (cf. Marin, 2003:46).

Russia's behaviour *vis-à-vis* the ND regime also affects its general performance. We have seen that Russia has used 'exit' as a strategy in order to demonstrate its position in relation to the ND (after the Third Foreign Ministers' Conference). Perhaps this strategy is seen as the most efficient one in order to get the attention from the EU member-states to its perceived concerns, as it feels that the principle of 'equal participation' does not work in reality. However, this very case can also be directly linked to the overall Denmark-Russia relations at the time.

If the time horizon of this thesis had been more extended, it would have been interesting to make some deeper conclusions as regards the Danish initiatives to integrate the ND within the Wider Europe initiative; its steps towards a partial reproduction of the ND regime. What effects will this move have on the performance of the ND? Today, it is only possible to speculate about possible effects. The general relationship between the ND and the Wider Europe initiative seems to be a very important aspect, perhaps the key, as regards the future development of the former (Interviewee 24, 25/11/2003).

If the Wider Europe initiative develops substantially, and if the ND regime transformation, initiated during the Danish Presidency, becomes more complete, the ND might in time become a 'composite sub-regime' within the broader and more heterogeneous Wider Europe 'composite policy regime'. However, as there currently are many differences between the two, as the Wider Europe initiative is still under development and as it has been stated that the ND will not be subordinated or replaced by the Wider Europe initiative, this is currently not the case. The ND is not seen in the documents underpinning the Wider Europe initiative as an official part of

it even if there is an intention to develop a single instrument/programme to deal with the new neighbours. The result of the first steps taken towards a partial transformation of the ND regime seems important to follow up and investigate.

With a more extended time horizon, it would also have been possible to evaluate the new orientation of the ND seen through the second Action Plan, and to assess the very effect of the enlargement on the development of the ND. Will the enlargement lead to a strengthened ND, or is the opposite case as possible? Especially the Baltic States' approach towards Russia as new EU members could have effects on the further development of the ND, both in positive and negative terms.

As regards the future development of the ND, it is of course very appealing to examine how its development will proceed during the three years when no Nordic country holds the Presidency function. This may actually show us to what extent the ND is dependent on the rotating Presidency assumed by a Nordic country for its deepening, and would, if integrated in this study, give more weight to the end-results of this thesis. Due to time restrictions, this has not been possible. Yet, further studies in this field would benefit from such an analysis.

The next Nordic Presidency will most probably be the Finnish one in the second half of 2006. As the second Action Plan ends the very same year, one can assume that the main topic for the new Finnish Presidency will be to prepare the ground for a third Action Plan. However, this is dependent on the overall perception of ND action plans by especially the member-states. If all member-states still find action plans for the

making and implementation of the ND useful and constructive, a third will probably be developed.

2.4 Concluding Remarks

The ND faces one of its perhaps most important challenges; the first EU enlargement towards countries in Central and Eastern Europe. It is highly likely that the enlargement will have tangible effects on the ND. One of its perhaps most visible changes in the ND region is that Russia will be the only partner country left out without a concrete membership perspective. Consequently, the future of the ND regime will depend a lot on how the EU member-states succeed in handling this matter; how successful cross-border cooperation in the region actually is, and to what extent Russia becomes better integrated into the region. The unique characteristics of the ND might actually be seen as especially suited to address these issues in the post-enlargement Union.

Indeed, Cremona (2003:207) has recently written that

the greatest challenge of the enlargement for EU external policy is likely to lie ... in the need to reshape EU policy towards the rest of Europe and its immediate neighbours. Initiatives such as the Northern Dimension ... encompassing both EU members and non-members and both bilateral and regional initiatives, will be important here. They indicate that alongside economic integration measures, important though these are, we are likely to see a growing emphasis on other dimensions of external policy, including environmental protection, security issues, border-control policy and other 'justice and home affairs' issues, including crime control and migration policy. Underpinning these and other external policies, and legitimising specific external policy initiatives as well as membership conditionality, will be an emphasis on the values – especially those of democracy, respect for human

rights, the rule of law, a market economy, and regional cooperation – with which the Union identifies.

The applicability of international regime theory to ‘dimensions’ on the EU’s foreign policy agenda, encompassing both EU members and non-members, could provide a suitable basis for further analysis in the years to come. Such an approach takes in the Union’s export of common values, policies and norms to neighbouring countries. Similar multidimensional approaches to that of the ND might develop in order to address new soft-security challenges that cross national borders in regions adjacent to the EU.

However, it is important to be aware of the specific characteristics of the ND region, which might make a direct transfer of the ND cooperation model to other regional settings more complex. The region is marked by its lack of open conflicts among the participants, and it is relatively prosperous with positive effects on the poorer countries. At least a minimal level of consensus has developed as regards common values, objectives and cooperation areas involved. There is already a well established network of regional bodies and developed cases of cross-border cooperation at several levels. Some states have shouldered a leadership role in order to promote the ND, and matters on which there is less consensus among the participants, such as ‘hard’ security issues, are excluded from the framework.

In addition, it remains to be seen whether the role of the rotating EU Presidency in the regime development process will continue to be a relevant focus of attention, which has been the case in this study. The Presidency function will probably be

fundamentally altered in the years to come, which of course influences the actorness of the Presidency in the EU's external relations.

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