

Nordic defence ministers' meeting in Skagen

On 5th and 6th November a Nordic defence ministers' meeting took place in Skagen, chaired by the Danish minister of defence Mr. Nick Hækkerup

The meeting was the second Nordic defence ministers' meetings during the Danish 2012 NORDEFECO presidency. At the centre of discussions was the topic of enhanced Nordic cooperation on tactical air transport. The ministers signed a letter of Intent, as a tangible expression of the excellent potential for deeper cooperation in this regard. The potential areas of cooperation in this regard include pooling of air transport capacities, command and control, joint training and common sustainment solutions. This cooperation initiative exemplifies the 'Smart Defence' nature of the Nordic defence cooperation. Possibilities for enhanced Nordic support to capacity building in East Africa were also discussed during the meeting.

The ministers also discussed the further development of Nordic cooperation including a number of other areas of potential cooperation in the short as well as longer term. In the short term airspace surveillance, procurement of small arms ammunition, tugboats, armored vehicles rubber tracks, batteries and unit group rations provide good opportunities for positive results.

The Ministers also discussed the situation in Afghanistan and the Nordic countries' future engagement. Nordic support for Afghanistan was confirmed, and enhanced Nordic cooperation possibilities after 2014 will be considered.

Furthermore ministers discussed possibilities for joint contributions to UN peacekeeping operations.

During the meeting, the Ministers welcomed the willingness of Finland and Sweden to participate in air surveillance in Iceland. A final decision, including a due parliamentary process, can be taken in Finland and Sweden only after the matter has been discussed in NATO.

The situation in Syria was discussed and the Ministers expressed their concern of the situation, and intent to follow the development closely.

Finland presented its plans and priorities for the chairmanship in 2013.

In the margin of the meeting the four Nordic Defence and Security Industry Associations signed a Memorandum of Understanding in the presence of the Nordic Ministers. The Memorandum aims at strengthening the cooperation of the Nordic Defence Industry by establishing a Joint Nordic Defence Industry Cooperation Group.

The ministers concluded at the end of the meeting: ***"This has been a most productive and useful meeting. The signature of the Letter of Intent on Nordic tactical transport cooperation as well as the identification of a number of other new areas for cooperation on capabilities is clear testimony for the new energy and political will for concrete cooperation within NORDEFECO. We are also very pleased indeed with our common Nordic efforts within NORDEFECO on Afghanistan and Eastern African capacity building"***.

[PICTURE OF THE MINISTERS]

From left: The Iceland ambassador to Denmark, Sturla Sigurdjónsson, the minister of defence of Denmark, Nick Hækkerup, the minister of defence of Sweden, Karin Enström, the permanent secretary of state of Norway, Eirik Øvre Thorshaug, and the minister of defence of Finland, Carl Haglund. **Kontrol af rækkefølge og navne.**