

Joint Press Statement

31 March 2016

NORDEFCO Ministerial Meeting 30-31 March 2016, Frederiksberg Palace, Denmark

Regional security challenges discussed by the Nordic defence ministers meeting in Copenhagen 30-31 March

The Nordic ministers of defence met at Frederiksberg Palace and had a good and open dialogue on Nordic defence and security matters. Furthermore, the ministers strongly condemned the terrorist attacks in Brussels on 22 March.

In relation to the terrorist attacks last week the ministers stated:

“Last week Brussels – the heart of Europe – was hit by callous terrorist attacks. Attacks not only on Belgium, but on all the values we share and promote. We strongly condemn the attacks and stand in solidarity with the Belgian people against the violent, cynical and fanatic terrorists behind these attacks. We are resolute in our determination to prevent and defeat terrorism and to fight ISIL, and we discussed this during the meeting. We will do this by standing even closer together – as the free democracies we are.”

The ministers also stated:

“Nordic defence cooperation is progressing well. In recent years we have seen an increased cooperation taking place and priorities to find effective solutions to our security and defence needs. Implementation of secure communication between the Nordic ministries of defence and military headquarters will be operational this year. Furthermore, we decided that the Nordic countries will provide air transport to the UN operation in Mali. This will create much needed sustainability and predictability for the UN, and will provide a useful model for enhanced Nordic cooperation in future UN operations.

We also discussed current security challenges in our region. Closer cooperation among the Nordic countries and the Baltic States contributes to enhanced security in our region. We remain concerned with the military activities in the Baltic Sea Region and follow these activities closely. Therefore, we urge Russia to be transparent and predictable when conducting military activities. Furthermore, we reiterate our position that the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea are violations of international law and other international agreements”.

Within the framework of NORDEFCO, the ministers meet twice every year to discuss areas of ongoing and potential cooperation. The following ministers participated in the meeting:

Danish Minister of Defence Peter Christensen, Swedish Minister of Defence Peter Hultqvist, Norwegian Minister of Defence Ine Eriksen Søreide, the Finnish Minister of Defence Jussi Niinistö and Director of Department for Security and Defence for Iceland Arnor Sigurjónsson.