



BALTIC SEA PEACE INITIATIVE

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The Baltic Sea Peace Initiative is a politically independent movement founded in 2025 to promote peaceful interaction among the countries and peoples of the Baltic Sea region without confrontation or militarization.

BACKGROUND

Relations between Western countries and Russia have gradually deteriorated since the beginning of this century. Relations between the EU and Russia have been frozen; mutual interaction has ceased, sanctions have dictated policy, and no dialogue has emerged. After the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, relations have been practically cut off altogether.

As a result of the war, the West has tightened its blockade of Russia. Finland and Sweden joined the NATO military alliance, and the border between the EU and Russia is now either completely closed or under strict control. Border fences are being built along the EU's eastern frontier, reminding us of the Cold War and increasing polarization. The

rhetoric between Russia and other Baltic countries has become militaristic, and various predictions have been made even about the possible outbreak of mutual war.

In the West, some have begun to speak of the Baltic Sea as NATO's internal sea, and certain political actors are trying to restrict the movement of Russian vessels. Energy and economic cooperation are at a standstill, and the sea has seen sabotage, pipeline explosions, and broken communication cables. The military presence of various countries in the Baltic Sea has increased. The arrival of nuclear weapons in the Nordic region has not been ruled out. Finland and the Baltic states have allowed foreign military bases on their soil.

The significance of the ports of St. Petersburg and the eastern Gulf of Finland for Russia cannot be underestimated. Access to the sea has historically been a determining factor in Russian foreign policy. When maritime routes have been blocked, it has often led to conflict. Similarly, more than 90% of Finland's foreign trade passes through the Baltic Sea, and the Baltic states also depend on the functioning of their ports.

As a result of this confrontation, the securi-

ty, trade, and cooperation of several Baltic Sea countries have been jeopardized. Foreign policy insecurity affects investment interest in Finland and the Baltic states. The end of eastern trade and the loss of income from Russian tourism have had a direct negative impact on the economy. The current situation and increasing military spending prevent economic recovery, weakening the welfare of citizens in all Baltic Sea states and hindering their development.

PURPOSE OF THE PEACE INITIATIVE

The purpose of the Baltic Sea Peace Initiative is to reduce confrontation and promote peaceful means of interaction between Russia and the other Baltic Sea states. Relations between the countries must return to a cooperative approach, and the security situation in the Baltic Sea must be stabilized.

The border areas between the EU and Russia must not become a network of military confrontation, armament, and bases, but areas of mutual exchange and trade, as they once were. No one wants to see missiles, cannons, tanks, fighter jets,

drones, and troops on high alert along the borders.

It is likely that regardless of the outcome of the war in Ukraine, the current political forces will continue on a path of confrontation. As a result, the militarization of the border regions will persist. If the opposing sides continue to amass military power along the borders, it will lead to an arms race and a potential clash. This must not be allowed to happen. What is needed instead of conflict is stability and predictability.

GOALS OF THE PEACE INITIATIVE

- To reduce the risk of military confrontation among the countries of the Baltic Sea region. No foreign troops should be stationed along Russia's borders; for example, Finland should manage its defense and security policy independently, as it has done so far.
- No offensive weapons or missiles that Russia could perceive as a direct threat (e.g., to St. Petersburg) should be placed along the eastern borders of Finland and the Baltic states.
- The Nordic region should commit to maintaining a nuclear-free zone. NATO aircraft operating in the region should not be certified to carry nuclear weapons.
- The security situation in the Baltic Sea must be stabilized. Maritime navigation by the states of the Baltic Sea should not be hindered but conducted under international maritime law. It is in no one's interest that areas arise where maritime traffic is endangered.
- The eastern border should be restored to the situation that existed before the war in Ukraine. Legal border crossings and trade between citizens must be permitted. Train traffic should be resumed. The border should unite, not divide. Economic prosperity and interaction must be secured on both sides of the border.
- Diplomatic means should be reintroduced. Relations with Russia should be normalized to the extent that the movement and rights

of ordinary people are guaranteed. Dialogue and open discussion with Russians should be encouraged.

- Pre-war cooperation projects and plans – including those concerning the Arctic and border regions – should be brought back to the agenda.
- Cultural cooperation must be immediately restored.
- The countries of the Baltic Sea must focus on the post-war period in Ukraine. War rhetoric must be replaced with peace rhetoric and exploration of cooperation opportunities.
- Russia, for its part, should take reciprocal steps to ease confrontation and work toward the goals of this initiative.

TO ACHIEVE ITS GOALS, THE PEACE INITIATIVE WILL

- Establish an association to coordinate its activities
- Form a board and an advisory group of experts
- Organize discussions, meetings, and conferences
- Issue statements to the media and press
- Seek international cooperation among the countries of the Baltic Sea, including Russia, and with peace movements and organizations operating in different countries
- Aim to influence public opinion, social perspectives, and reduce rhetoric that increases confrontation
- Work to counter propaganda, disinformation, hate speech, and misunderstandings
- Remain nonpartisan and independent – open to participation by anyone who accepts its goals

INTERESTED?

To strengthen its activities, the Baltic Sea Peace Initiative seeks active volunteers and organizations willing to contribute to changing the current situation – to influence both political decision-making and militaristic attitudes in civil society.

The Baltic Sea must be a sea of peace, not confrontation – and that applies to all the countries on its shores, their borders, and their citizens. The future and security cannot be built with weapons, but through cooperation and greater mutual understanding. Finland and the Baltic States must not

become a military outpost on the periphery of the EU, but an active, independent, and credible foreign policy and economic actor in a broader Europe.

The views, mechanisms, and international relationships we create matter – at both the leadership and citizen levels, regardless of political affiliation. Let's make the Baltic Sea a safe region to live in – together.

Read more: rauhanaloite.fi
or facebook.fi/itamerenrauhanaloite





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