

SWEDEN RECOGNIZES THE BALTIC STATES

The Swedish Government has today recognized Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as sovereign states. This decision was taken after consultation with the Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs.

At the same time, the government has decided to establish Embassies in the three Baltic States.

The government will also be appointing Ambassadors to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as soon as they have been approved by the governments of the three countries.

The Swedish Embassies in Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius will be officially inaugurated by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Sten Andersson, the Minister for Foreign Trade, Mrs Anita Gradin and the Minister for International Development Cooperation, Mrs Lena Hjelm-Wallén, respectively, when they visit Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on Thursday 29 August. *IERADĀS LATĻĀ PREIVALDE*

PREREQUISITES UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

The government's decision is based on the fact that the requirements for recognition under international law have now been met. In questions of recognition, Sweden applies what is known as the principle of universality. We recognize all states which meet the criteria for a state under international law, that is to say one territory, one people and a government which exercises effective control over the territory in question.

The fact that the three Baltic States have not exercised control over their territories has hitherto meant that Sweden has not been able to recognize them as independent states. Today, the situation is different.

All three states have now proclaimed their independence. It is significant that President Gorbachev has declared that the Soviet leadership is no longer opposed to the departure of Soviet Republics from the Union, if they so wish. In addition, the three Baltic States have been recognized by the Russian Republic, which is currently the dominant political force in the Soviet Union. We presume that this will mean that Russia will also play its part in ensuring that the sovereignty of the Baltic States is respected.

Furthermore, there are several examples of the transfer of de facto control over territory to the three Baltic States. This includes control of frontiers and the introduction of independent visa procedures. Similarly, the police authorities which have hitherto obeyed Moscow are being transferred to the Baltic authorities. The newly-appointed Soviet Minister of Defence has promised negotiations on the presence of Soviet military forces in the Baltic States.

For some time, Sweden has been the only country which, in practical terms, has had personnel, chancery premises and housing accommodation in all the three Baltic States. At the moment there are six Swedish Diplomatic Officials posted in Tallinn, five in Riga and one in Vilnius.

This means that our future Ambassadors have an excellent starting point. This is particularly important at a time when we shall be extending our ties with our neighbours on the other side of the Baltic Sea.

COOPERATION COMMISSIONS

In Sweden, we expect that the cooperation which has already been initiated with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will expand very rapidly. The government will therefore be proposing that a bilateral cooperation commission should be established for each Baltic State.

These commissions are to be responsible, together with representatives of the Baltic States, for drawing up and formulating our cooperation and our support in various areas in a coordinated and systematic manner. On the Swedish side, the three commissions will each be headed by an Under-Secretary of State and it is intended that they will be meeting for the first time within the next few days.

FOREIGN TRADE COOPERATION

Swedish industry and commerce should be able to play a major part in developing the foreign trade of the Baltic States. Swedish investment in the three countries should be promoted. The government also intends to prepare bilateral trade agreements, double taxation agreements and tariff cooperation agreements with the three Baltic States.

INTENSIFIED BALTIC SEA COOPERATION

The independence of the Baltic States means increased opportunities for further extending and expanding Baltic Sea cooperation. The Ronneby conference on the Baltic Sea environment which was held last year represented a major step forward, but the prerequisites for practical follow-up measures have now improved.

The government will be promoting cooperation of a practical nature between the Baltic Coastal States, now that the political barriers have been removed. In the transport sector, in particular, there should now be excellent prerequisites for implementing the Transport Ministers Meeting which has been planned.