

**JOINT STATEMENT  
OF  
THE NORTHERN GROUP MEETING OF  
DEFENCE MINISTERS, 20 MAY 2020**

Today, 20 May 2020, under the current chairmanship of Latvia, the Defence Ministers of the Northern Group (consisting of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom) met by video teleconference (VTC).

The Northern Group is a valuable forum in which members come together informally for discussions on defence and security issues common to us as Northern European nations, and to explore new opportunities to work together.

Northern Group nations are committed to maintaining security and stability in our northern European region and the wider continent, as well as strengthening the bonds with our transatlantic partners.

During the meeting the Northern Group Ministers considered a number of key issues regarding the COVID-19 outbreak. Ministers discussed the impact of the pandemic on their Armed Forces' capabilities and readiness; and the importance of adapting to the 'new normality' this crisis has brought by ensuring our forces remain agile and combat-ready, including by restarting military exercises, sustaining operational deployments and continuing to increase defence spending in order to provide the necessary military capabilities.

Ministers also shared lessons learned from responding to the crisis and the challenges posed by various disinformation activities.

Today, all members of the Northern Group expressed their solidarity in these challenging times. We salute the work of our Armed Forces in support of the civil authorities managing the crisis.