

Public Law 106-255
106th Congress

An Act

To foster cross-border cooperation and environmental cleanup in Northern Europe.

Aug. 2, 2000

[H.R. 4249]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Cross-Border
Cooperation and
Environmental
Safety in
Northern Europe
Act of 2000.
Hazardous
substances.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Cross-Border Cooperation and Environmental Safety in Northern Europe Act of 2000”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) **FINDINGS.**—The Congress finds the following:

(1) Northern Europe is an increasingly vital part of Europe and one that offers great opportunities for United States investment.

(2) Northern Europe offers an excellent opportunity to make progress toward the United States vision of a secure, prosperous, and stable Europe, in part because of—

(A) historical tradition of regional cooperation;

(B) the opportunity to engage Russia in positive, cooperative activities with its neighbors to the west;

(C) commitment by the Baltic states to regional cooperation and integration into western institutions; and

(D) longstanding, strong ties with the United States.

(3) The United States Northern Europe Initiative (NEI) provides the conceptual and operational framework for United States policy in the region, focused on developing a regional network of cooperation in the important areas of business and trade promotion, law enforcement, the environment, energy, civil society, and public health.

(4) A central objective of the United States Northern Europe Initiative is to promote cross-border cooperation among the countries in the region.

(5) A wide variety of regional and cross-border projects have been initiated under the United States Northern Europe Initiative since the Initiative was established in 1997, including the following:

(A) A United States-Lithuanian training program for entrepreneurs from Belarus and Kaliningrad.

(B) The Great Lakes-Baltic Sea Partnership program that is being implemented by the Environmental Protection Agency.

(C) A Center of Excellence for Treatment of Multidrug-Resistant Tuberculosis in Riga, Latvia.

(D) A regional HIV/AIDS strategy being developed under United States and Finnish leadership.

(E) Multiple efforts to combat organized crime, including regional seminars for police officers and prosecutors.

(F) Programs to encourage reform of the Baltic electricity market and encourage United States investment in such market.

(G) Language and job training programs for Russian-speaking minorities in Latvia and Estonia to promote social integration in those countries.

(H) A mentoring partnership program for woman entrepreneurs in the northwest region of Russia and the Baltic states, as part of broader efforts to promote women's participation in political and economic life.

(6) Norway, Sweden, and Finland have made considerable efforts to provide assistance to the newly independent Baltic states and to the Northwest region of Russia. In particular, the United States notes the request placed before the European Union by Finland in 1999 for the creation and extensive funding by the European Union of a "Northern Dimension" Initiative to substantially address the problems that now exist in Northern Europe with regard to economic development, protection of the environment, the safety and containment of nuclear materials, and other issues.

(7) The United States commends the endorsement of the "Northern Dimension" Initiative by the European Council at its meeting in Helsinki, Finland in December 1999 and calls on the European Union to act on that endorsement through the provision of substantial funding for the Initiative.

(8) While the European Union, its member states, and other European countries should clearly take the lead in addressing the challenges posed in Northern Europe, in particular through appropriate yet substantial assistance provided by the European Union, the United States Northern Europe Initiative, and this Act are intended to supplement such efforts and build on the considerable assistance that the United States has already provided to the Baltic states and the Russian Federation. Partnership with other countries in the region means modest United States investment can have significant impact.

(9) The United States Northern Europe Initiative's focus on regional environmental challenges is particularly important. Northern Europe is home to significant environmental problems, particularly the threat posed by nuclear waste from Russian submarines, icebreakers, and nuclear reactors.

(10) In particular, 21,000 spent fuel assemblies from Russian submarines are lying exposed near Andreyeva Bay, nearly 60 dangerously decrepit nuclear submarines, many in danger of sinking, are languishing in the Murmansk area of Northwest Russia, whole reactors and radioactive liquid waste are stored on unsafe floating barges, and there are significant risks of marine and atmospheric contamination from accidents arising from loss of electricity or fire on deteriorating, poorly monitored nuclear submarines.

(11) This waste poses a threat to the safety and stability of Northern Europe and to countries of the Eurasian continent.

(12)(A) In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency has facilitated the expansion and upgrading of a facility for

the treatment of low-level liquid radioactive waste from the decommissioning of nuclear submarines docked at naval facilities in the Arctic region of Russia.

(B) The Environmental Protection Agency has also initiated a project to construct an 80-ton prototype cask for the storage and transport of civilian-controlled spent nuclear fuel, much of it damaged and currently stored onboard an aging vessel anchored in Murmansk Harbor. Currently in the design phase, this project is scheduled for completion in 2000.

(13) Working with the countries in the region to address these environmental problems remains vital to the long-term national interest of the United States.

(14) The United States and other countries are currently negotiating a number of agreements with Russia which will provide internationally accepted legal protections for the United States and other countries that provide nuclear waste management assistance to Russia. Regrettably, it has not yet been possible to resolve remaining differences over liability, taxation of assistance, privileges and immunities for foreign contractors, and audit rights.

(15) Concluding these agreements is vital to the continued provision of such assistance and to the possible development of new programs.

(16) With the election of Russian President Vladimir Putin, the opportunity presents itself to surmount these problems, to conclude these outstanding agreements, and to allow assistance programs to move forward to alleviate this problem.

(17) The United States Government is currently studying whether dismantlement of multi-purpose submarines is in the national interest.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to demonstrate concrete support for continued cross-border cooperation in Northern Europe and immediate efforts to assist in the clean up of nuclear waste in that region.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.

It is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) the United States Northern Europe Initiative is a sound framework for future United States involvement in Northern Europe;

(2) the European Union should move expeditiously to authorize and fund the proposed “Northern Dimension” Initiative at appropriate yet substantial levels of assistance;

(3) the United States should continue to support a wide-ranging strengthening of democratic and civic institutions on a regional basis to provide a foundation for political stability and investment opportunities, including cross-border exchanges, in Northern Europe;

(4) the United States should demonstrate continued commitment to address environmental security challenges in Northwest Russia, in cooperation with partners in the region;

(5) recently-elected Russian President Vladimir Putin should rapidly conclude pending nuclear waste management agreements to enable assistance programs to go forward; and

(6) assistance to Russia on nuclear waste management should only be provided after issues related to liability, taxation

of assistance, privileges and immunities for foreign contractors, and audit rights have been resolved.

SEC. 4. SUPPORT FOR UNITED STATES NORTHERN EUROPE INITIATIVE PROJECTS.

(a) **AVAILABILITY OF AMOUNTS FROM EAST EUROPEAN AND THE BALTIC STATES ASSISTANCE.**—Of the amounts available for fiscal year 2001 to carry out the provisions of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Support for Eastern European Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989 for assistance and for related programs for Eastern Europe and the Baltic states, not less than \$2,000,000 shall be used for projects described in subsection (c).

(b) **AVAILABILITY OF AMOUNTS FROM INDEPENDENT STATES OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION ASSISTANCE.**—Of the amounts available for fiscal year 2001 to carry out the provisions of chapter 11 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992 for assistance for the independent states of the former Soviet Union and related programs, not less than \$2,000,000 shall be used for the projects described in subsection (c).

(c) **PROJECTS DESCRIBED.**—The projects described in this subsection are United States Northern Europe Initiative projects relating to environmental cleanup, law enforcement, public health, energy, business and trade promotion, and civil society.

SEC. 5. REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY.

Deadline.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the heads of other appropriate Federal departments and agencies, shall prepare and submit to the Congress a report on—

(1) the threat to the environmental security of the countries of Northern Europe and other countries of Europe and Asia presented by Russian marine nuclear reactors, waste, and contamination; and

(2) identifying the possibilities for new and expanded United States and multilateral assistance programs for environmental clean-up in Northwest Russia, including technical exchanges and private-public partnerships.

SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **NORTHERN EUROPE.**—The term “Northern Europe” means the northwest region of the Russian Federation (including Kaliningrad), the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Republic of Finland, the Republic of Iceland, the Kingdom of Norway, the Republic of Poland, and the Kingdom of Sweden.

(2) **UNITED STATES NORTHERN EUROPE INITIATIVE.**—The term “United States Northern Europe Initiative” means the framework agreement established in 1997 between the United States and the countries of Northern Europe to promote stability in the Baltic Sea region and to strengthen key institutions

and security structures of the United States and the countries
of Northern Europe.

Approved August 2, 2000.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 4249:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 146 (2000):

May 15, considered and passed House.

July 19, considered and passed Senate.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 36 (2000):

Aug. 3, Presidential statement.