

**Joint Statement by the Benelux and Nordic Countries: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden - 27 November 2023**

We, the Benelux and Nordic countries, are neighbours and allies in a rapidly changing geopolitical reality. Faced with numerous challenges, we met in Brussels on 27 November 2023 to discuss closer cooperation on defending and promoting our values on the global stage.

We are firmly committed to preserving a functioning multilateral system, strengthening the rules-based international order and achieving the SDGs. The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the conflict in Israel/Gaza demonstrate how essential it is that we sustain our strong partnership in order to address common challenges. These conflicts also highlight the need to defend our shared values in forums such as the EU, the UN and NATO. We are devoted to the rule of law, democracy, human rights, gender equality and international humanitarian law and to the obligations that this entails.

We also see reasons for heightened awareness with regard to the security of Northern Europe. This calls for the protection of critical infrastructure and closer cooperation to tackle hybrid and cyber threats.

To these ends, we will pursue joint innovation and increased collaboration at political level.