

Nordics and Baltics to share diplomatic resources

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The foreign ministers of the Nordic and Baltic countries announced Tuesday in Helsinki that they would be pooling diplomatic resources in some embassies and consulates around the world.

"The agreement we signed today that we will send our diplomats to each other's embassies, is very practical and it already functions," Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Paet said at a so-called NB8 summit -- of the eight Nordic and Baltic nations -- hosted by Finland.

The deal "will make it easier for the Nordic and Baltic countries to maintain a diplomatic presence around the world by enabling flexible and cost-effective solutions," a joint statement said.

Nordic states already share diplomatic missions and responsibilities in some countries and the memorandum of understanding signed in Helsinki formally expands the arrangement to include Baltic nations.

"There are many agreements where one country represents another country in visa issues for example," said Paet, noting that Estonian diplomats have worked out of Finnish embassies in India and Zambia, for instance.

The Helsinki meeting was attended by the foreign ministers of Finland, Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania, Iceland and Estonia, in addition to government representatives from Denmark and Norway.