

On February 26, 2015, a **meeting of the Operative Committee of the Baltic Sea Task Force on Organized Crime** started in Moscow.

This is the first meeting under the Russian Chairmanship in the BSTF in 2015-2016 with the participation of the Baltic States' law enforcement delegations.

Igor Zubov, State Secretary, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, pointed out in his opening speech that our country paid great attention to strengthening international law enforcement cooperation.

“This cooperation in all its aspects corresponds to long-term national interests of the Russian Federation and all the TF Member-States. It is evident that the interaction of law enforcement agencies of the Baltic Sea States is the most actively operating instrument of the regional cooperation and is depoliticized by tradition”, Igor Zubov specified.

Deputy Minister stressed that “within the framework of its Chairmanship Russia will pursue a policy aimed at implementing the tasks that the Task Force is facing in line with its mandate”. According to Igor Zubov, “one of the main tasks that needs to be solved vitally is to develop and regulate the tool for a facilitated information exchange between the Baltic Sea States' law enforcement agencies”.

Major General of Police Alexander Prokopchuk, Head of the Interpol NCB of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, addressed in his speech the participants of the meeting with the words of gratitude for the work done. He mentioned that the international search for wanted persons was carried out actively thanks to this Task Force. Though, special attention should be paid to coordinate efforts in combating cybercrime.

Major General of Police Boris Govorun, Head of the Pskov Region Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, shared information about the international cooperation organization.

Due to its geographical position the Pskov Region is a transit area. It has customs' and border checkpoints in its territory. 600000 persons passed through the region last year alone. The interaction with foreign countries is carried out mainly through the Interpol channels, like in other regions of Russia.

It brings positive results, for example, a group of Latvian citizens was detained who were suspected in having committed thefts from ATMs with the use of readers. A quick suppression of this criminal activity allowed minimizing the damage caused to the State.

Summarizing the event, Igor Zubov assured that “Russia as a Chairman will monitor that the cooperation within the framework of the Baltic Sea Task Force complements the work at other cooperation platforms while supporting its status of one of the important regional structures”.

The participants of the meeting discussed combating transnational crime, problems of revealing and suppressing customs' crimes in passenger air transportation in the Baltic Sea Region during this two-day event.

Major General of Police Petr Popov, Deputy Head of the Legal Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, pointed out that a priority in this sphere was the introduction co-designed products into the work of national police and customs' units.

The Russian Party reminded its foreign colleagues that the protection of the society from violent extremism and radicalization, the prevention of illegal migration, first of all, from Russia and Belarus to Lithuania, remained vital in the Baltic Sea Region at the moment.