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# Legal Aspects of the Baltic Sea

The Baltic Sea has always had a critical role as a trade route. Many states are entirely dependent on the functioning of these maritime trade routes. For centuries the fight over the supremacy over Mare Balticum has dominated the security situation for the neighbouring states. Wars were fought, and piracy and privateering were rampant. The Baltic Sea was a battleground for major sea battles and covert operations with implications far beyond the immediate coastal states. Over the centuries the power balance shifted: coastal regions were conquered, lost, occupied, annexed and resurrected. Activities in the maritime space and the airspace above it are still crucial security indicators.

Against this background it is remarkable that the Baltic Sea states have managed to establish a structure of cooperation, based on legal agreements. The Baltic Sea is the most 'delimited' maritime area in the world. All states have concluded delimitation treaties with their neighbours. The cooperation for a better environment is regulated and organised by the Helsinki Commission, and the Åland islands are demilitarised.

How did this structure of cooperation come about, and does it work? What are the future challenges?



## **Ambassador Marie Jacobsson**

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Ambassador Marie Jacobsson holds a Doctor of Law from the University of Lund, Sweden.

She is a Member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, a designated arbitrator under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, designated arbitrator under the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty and designated Alternate Arbitrator of the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration within the OSCE.

Ambassador Jacobsson's work focusses on international peace and security matters. She has extensive experience in high-level multilateral and bilateral negotiations on matters such as international humanitarian law, law of the sea, polar law, international environmental law, boundary delimitation and regional security affairs. Ambassador Jacobsson has also worked as Security Policy Analyst at the Swedish Armed Forces and led a project on the Baltic Sea and International Law at the Swedish Defence University.

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