Two More Maritime Boundary Agreements Concluded in the Eastern Baltic Sea in 1997

Since the disappearance of the Soviet Union from the political map of the world in December 1991, the Eastern Baltic Sea became an area where many new maritime boundaries had to be delimited because of the regained independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. At the same time, however, it also raised the question as to the exact impact of these events on the existing maritime boundaries.¹

A first set of two agreements was arrived at during 1996, which provided an example of both sides of the coin. The agreement between Estonia and Latvia,² concluded during the summer of that year, plotted a maritime boundary where none had ever existed before, except maybe for a very short stretch close to the terminal point of the land boundary. The Treaty concluded between Estonia and Finland a few months later,³ on the other hand, only created a novel maritime boundary with respect to a negligible part of the overall length of the delimitation line agreed upon between the parties by means of this agreement. With only one exception, the turning and terminal points of the agreement all correspond to turning points already established by the former Soviet Union in its relations with Finland. An English translation of the text of these agreements, together with a brief comment, has already appeared in the pages of this Current Development section.⁴

A second set of two agreements has been signed during the course of 1997.

² Agreement between the Republic of Estonia and the Republic of Latvia on the Maritime Delimitation in the Gulf of Riga, the Strait of Irbe and the Baltic Sea, 12 July 1996. This agreement entered into force on 10 October 1996.
³ Agreement between the Republic of Estonia and the Republic of Finland on the Boundary of the Maritime Zones in the Gulf of Finland and the Northern Baltic Sea, 18 October 1996. This agreement entered into force on 7 January 1997.