



TECHNICAL DELIMITATION OF THE ÅLAND CONVENTION

This technical delimitation has been carried out by the National Land Survey of Finland at the request of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 2012. The request for action is in Appendix 1. The task has been to delimit the demilitarised and neutralized area of the Åland Islands by using a modern coordinate system. By using this information, it is possible to delimit the area on different maps and on the terrain in an unambiguous way and in accordance with treaties.

1. International regulation of the borders related to demilitarisation and neutralisation of the Åland Islands

Demilitarisation and neutralisation are based on the following international treaties:

the Convention on the Åland Islands, signed by France, Great Britain and Russia in 1856

the Convention on non-fortification and neutralisation of the Åland Islands from 1921 (the Åland Convention, SopS 1/1922)

the Agreement concerning the Åland Islands between Finland and the Soviet Union from 1940 (the agreement from 1940, SopS 24/1940).

The decision by the League of Nations on the Åland Island, made on 24 June, 1921, concerns Finland's sovereignty over the Åland Islands, Åland's autonomy and Åland's demilitarisation. As the result of the resolution, the Åland Convention was signed on 20 October of the same year. The convention was signed by Iceland, Great Britain, Italy, Latvia, Poland, France, Sweden, Germany, Finland, Denmark and Estonia.

The borders of the demilitarised Åland Islands are defined in the second article of the Åland Convention. The same delimitation of the Åland Islands is included in the agreement from 1940. The Åland Convention also concerns the airspace over the demilitarised zone.

2. The boundaries set in the Åland convention

First of all, the Åland Convention specifies the Åland Islands. They refer to all the islands, islets and rocks that are located in the territorial water area bounded by straight lines connecting 17 geographical points specified with longitudinal and latitudinal coordinates. In this report these lines are referred to as **borderlines** as defined in the Åland Convention.

Territorial waters that extend three nautical miles from "the afore said islands, islets and rocks which are not perpetually submerged at low tide" are also considered as a part of the Åland Islands region. These territorial waters cannot, however, extend at any part beyond the borderlines.

According to the Åland Convention, the demilitarised zone consists of the Åland Islands and their territorial waters extending three nautical miles from the islands. In this report, this boundary of three nautical miles is referred to as the **border zone as defined in the Åland Convention**. In the West, North and especially in the East the border zone connects with the borderlines.

3. The borderlines

3.1 Definition of the borderlines in the ETRS89 system

In the Åland Convention, the borderlines have been defined by 17 geographical points that refer to certain British, Finnish and Russian nautical charts. These points have in this technical report been transferred into the modern ETRS89 system in two groups. This is a pan-European geodetic system, created for collecting, storing and analysing geographic information. The Finnish version of this system is called EUREF-FIN.

Points 1–11 are located in the archipelago in the Kihti open sea area between the mainland and the Åland Islands. The EUREF-FIN coordinates of these points were defined by first drawing the points on the copies of the nautical charts mentioned in the convention, using the original coordinates. Then the islands, coastal lines, shallows and depth contour lines were compared with newer nautical charts and the latest nautical charts from the EUREF-FIN system. Finally, the EUREF-FIN coordinates of the points were defined on the basis of the most recent nautical charts.

The second group consists of points 12–17. According to the Åland Convention, the lines connecting points 14, 15 and 16 follow the state boundary between Finland (formerly Russia) and Sweden. Points 13 and 17 follow the corresponding border points of the economic zone on the borders between Finland and Sweden that have been defined later. The coordinates of the border points marking the boundaries of Finland and Sweden in the EUREF-FIN were last defined during the demarcation of 2006, and the EUREF-FIN coordinates for points 13–17 have been taken from the final documents of this demarcation. Point 12 is set to be located at the same latitude as the modified point 13 using in the 1921 Convention occurring longitude difference.

On the Märket skerry, the borderline follows the state boundary of Finland and Sweden according to the demarcation documents of 2006.

3.2 Coordinates for the points defining the borderlines

The points defined in the Åland Convention, connected by lines delimiting the territorial waters of the Åland Islands, are represented in Appendix 2.

4. The border zone

4.1 The border zone as defined in the Åland Convention

The border zone has been defined on the basis of the digital topographic database of the National Land Survey of Finland. This data has been supplemented within some open sea areas by the measurements collected in the hydrographical surveying and stored by the Finnish Transport Agency using the reference level of the year 2006 theoretical mean sea level (MW2006). The border zone extends three nautical miles (5556 m) from the islands, islets and rocks recorded to these official databases.

4.2 The base points delimiting the border zone

The parts of the border zone not delimited by borderlines are formed by the connected parts of circular arches. These circles have been drawn with the radius of three nautical miles and their centres are the outermost islands, islets or rocks located inside the borderlines.

There are 91 base points on the South and North sides of the Åland islands and four base points in the Bogskär area, which forms a separate border zone. The coordinates of the base points are listed in Appendix 3.

4.3 The coordinates of the border zone

The border zone consists of the aforementioned connected parts of the circular arches and in the East, West, and partly in the North of borderlines or parts of them. The points of the border zone are listed in Appendix 4.

On the Eastern and Western borderlines, the points of the border zone follow geodetic lines, and on the Northern borderline the points follow the rhumb line. On the circular arches the distance of the border zone coordinate points is approximately 210 metres.

5. A map of the boundaries in the Åland islands

The boundaries of the demilitarised and neutralised zone of the Åland Islands are presented in the map, included in Appendix 5. It presents an overall picture of the borders. The lists of coordinates included in this report can be used for a detailed presentation of the borders.

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