

Clever climate legislation

A hands-on guide for
parliamentarians to achieve
the Paris Agreement

 Nordic Council

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Steen Gade

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Nordic Council

Nordens Hus

Ved Stranden 18

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Contents

- 6 Foreword by Britt Lundberg, President of the Nordic Council**
- 9 National parliamentarians were given the task and responsibility in Paris 2015**
- 12 The political toolbox needs to be expanded**
- 14 The burning platform**
- 18 What has been decided in the Paris Agreement, in the EU and in the Nordic region?**
- 21 Forthcoming crucial international events, and how climate parliamentarians can work**
- 25 Challenges facing the Nordic countries**
- 28 Climate legislation**
- 32 The key working tools**
- 34 How do you become a climate clever parliamentarian?**
- 38 Views from Nordic parliamentarians**
- 45 The long term**
- 46 Abbreviations**
- 46 References**
- 47 About the author**

Foreword



By Britt Lundberg,
President of the Nordic Council

Future living conditions on our planet will be greatly influenced by how well people manage to solve the complex challenge of climate change. Therefore, parliamentarians around the world find themselves faced with a major task of developing wise and effective

climate legislation, which can maintain the world on course with the goals set by the Paris Agreement of 2015. Using legislation, the parliaments must hold the government firm on an overall climate goal. They must approve the laws that are a prerequisite for the

reduction plans being implemented. The legislative assemblies must also create an understanding among their respective voters for the measures deemed necessary to contribute to the solution to the challenge of climate change.

There will be a need for the parliaments to focus on climate work for decades to come. The existing laws must be revised and new laws developed. Focusing on the 1.5-degree target and the stock-taking in 2018 set out in the Paris Agreement also means, that many and comprehensive decisions must be taken in a relatively short time if the impact of climate change is to be reduced to manageable size. It will be the national parliaments that must take many of the coming difficult but necessary decisions that will change the way we live and how we manage our economies.

The "clever" legislation must be able to ensure both continuity and long-term stability in climate policy. It must give the parliamentarians better conditions to ensure that government is doing what they have promised. It must provide a stable framework for investors and the business sector to provide the solutions. Unfortunately, there is no blueprint and definitive answer to the question of what constitutes good climate legislation. Fortunately, however, there are now

many experiences upon which we can draw in order to reduce the risk that ambitions for good climate laws are not fulfilled. In the Nordic Council, we have therefore agreed that a handbook that puts the parliamentary work into perspective and draws on the experiences that we have could be helpful for future work on climate change in the parliamentary assemblies. To carry out this task, we contacted Steen Gade, who has long experience working on the challenges of climate change as a member of the Danish Parliament, as director of the Danish Environmental Protection Agency and as a member of the Nordic Council.

In this handbook for parliamentarians, Steen Gade has gathered the experiences of climate legislation and parliamentary climate work that has been carried out in the Nordic countries so far. He also describes the international processes that led the international community to come to an agreement in Paris in December 2015 and how this agreement creates the framework for future regular reporting on the results and submission of new and enhanced national efforts. I hope that both current and future generations of parliamentarians in the Nordic countries, as well as in other countries, will be inspired and benefit from this handbook in the effort to limit the effects of global climate change.



FOTO: PEXELS



FOTO: PEXELS

National parliamentarians were given the task and responsibility in Paris 2015

When the Foreign Minister of France, on December 12th, 2015 at the COP21 (Conference of the Parties) was able to declare the Paris Agreement as adopted, the assembled delegates broke into standing and prolonged ovation. And precisely at that moment, a major responsibility was thrown directly into the laps of the national parliamentarians. Not that national parliamentarians had been free of responsibility before this. However, responsibility now became both completely formalised and heavier than before. Yes, perhaps even overwhelming to think about.

Finally, the whole world had reached a climate change agreement. One hundred ninety-five countries had adopted the world's first universal, legally binding global climate agreement. Twenty-three years after the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) had been adopted at the World Summit meeting on Sustainable

Development in 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

In Paris, everyone was in. And many even said 'Yes, thank you,' and added a concerned, 'Finally!' For until this moment, the world had experienced years of negotiations without an overall result. Fortunately, there were skilled officials who held the negotiating channel open, even when things looked darkest. There were major defeats along the way, and a couple of partial victories. But now, finally, after 23 years of work, there was success. The world had reached a global agreement, and it came to be called the Paris Agreement.

Up to the COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009, the process had been governed by the desire to have global, legally binding greenhouse gas reduction targets for countries and for groups of countries. This is how the Kyoto Agreement of 1997 was constructed. However, Kyoto contained only emissions reduction targets for the developed countries.

The Paris Agreement is instead based on the countries' voluntary reduction targets and climate plans. These are the National Determined Contributions (NDCs). In addition, the countries are encouraged to develop and present long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies. The other main element of the agreement is that it is now about all of us. All countries, both developed and developing countries, must commit themselves to climate action. All countries must contribute, but in different ways, of course. The contribution depends on the countries' differing capacities.

So now, the great global trench warfare between North and South ought to have ended. By October 5th, 2016, a sufficient number of countries had ratified the agreement so that it could enter into force a month later. At present, 168 countries out of 197 have ratified the Paris Agreement.

Because the agreement is now based upon what the countries themselves report, all the national parliamentarians have been given a new major responsibility, and thereby an area of work that – in the same way as transport planning, education,

etc. – should become a part of the parliamentary routine. And climate should be especially important as an indispensable and integrated part of economic policy. Thereby, it is a part of both the long-term plans and the annual budgets.

What climate pledges should my country submit? How does my country follow up on already announced commitments? How can we strengthen our own efforts and increase our ambitions? And how do I myself and the countries work more closely together to achieve the goals? This is now an area of work for all parliamentarians, not only those who sit on climate or environment committees. No, now everyone is included. All parliamentarians need to become climate parliamentarians.

On one point, climate policy perhaps differs from other policies.

The greenhouse effect is global, and it requires much closer cooperation across borders. Also for parliamentarians. The agreement was signed a few months after the UN General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These two major global agreements are linked, and their implementation should be considered

in context. The SDG targets must be completed by 2030, while the climate targets will be operating until 2025 or 2030, all depending on what each individual country has reported. After this, new climate targets must be set in five-year modules. By 2020, all countries must either confirm or revise their current targets and climate plans, and the level of ambition must not be lowered.

With the United States' very worrying message that it intends to withdraw from the agreement, the above is perhaps described in simplified form. The United States is the country with the world's second highest CO₂ emissions and still plays a very significant role in global technology development. However, the impact of lacking American political support for the Paris Agreement has so far been very limited. The United States' decision has not led other countries to follow suit.

Responsibility for implementation of the Paris Agreement lies largely with the European countries, but others are also making great efforts. Perhaps we will find that the new major countries in Asia – China and India – will now become more active in implementing the agreement. In any case, it seems that among many companies in a number of areas – such as solar cell production, wind turbine production, advanced control systems and electric cars – there has emerged a very strong global commercial competition to develop and produce best and cheapest. And here the American companies are fully involved in the competition, together with their European counterparts. And hard pressed by the emerging economies, who are exerting serious efforts to take the lead.

The political toolbox needs to be expanded

All this means that the working methods which parliamentarians are accustomed to using to exert their influence on developments, to pressure their government and to influence the public debate generally, now also apply to the entire climate area. The Nordic countries, in their respective parliaments, have fairly similar tools. It is possible to present proposals, to influence the budget, and to hold a minister accountable on agreements and promises. These are the working methods that must be used just as aggressively when it comes to climate as in other areas. However, since the climate area intervenes in most policy areas, requires major conversion processes and is also of a global nature, the toolbox needs to be expanded.

International cooperation will thus become more important in the coming years. The Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers will become more important for all the Nordic countries, and this applies even more so for cooperation with the EU. All five Nordic countries have politically acceded to the EU's climate targets by 2030. The Nordic countries therefore

have common goals when they meet each other in international negotiations. These meetings will be primarily in the many negotiations in the UNFCCC, with annual climate summits and new, more ambitious national contributions every five years. In the maritime area, CO₂ emissions are discussed in the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and in the case of aviation, the negotiations take place within the framework of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Hence, there exists a large field of work outside the global climate negotiations in the UNFCCC.

In addition, the major transformation requires political decisions that promote technological change. Today's technological possibilities are quite considerable, but existing policies often operate in the opposite direction. This issue must be addressed, while the conversion must be promoted through wise policy decisions. Everything from research, support for product development, promotion of new green technology and public procurement are tools in the expanded toolbox.



FOTO: UNSPLASH

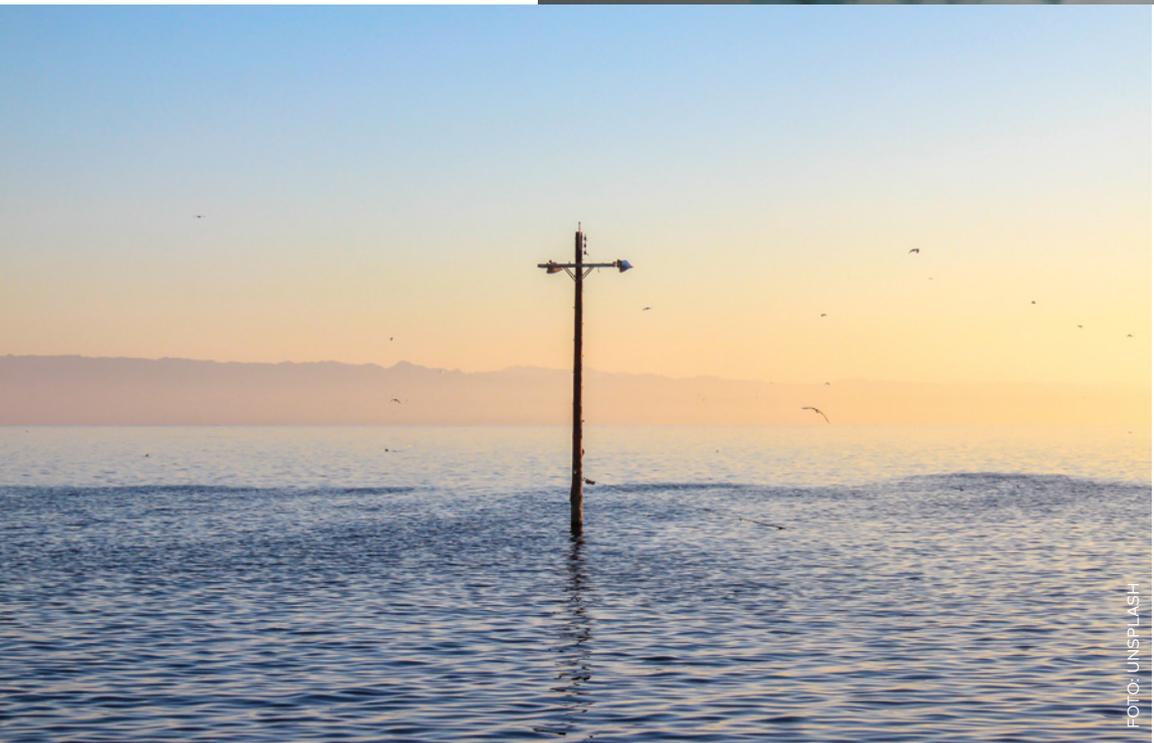


FOTO: UNSPLASH

The burning platform

What does the burning platform look like? This question was asked in 1988, when the UN began to assemble all existing scientific knowledge in order to assess all aspects of climate change. It was a year after publication of the famous report on the future of the world (Our Common Future, known as the Brundtland Report, named after Norway's former prime minister). The Brundtland Report laid the foundation for comprehensive global and citizen study groups that the world had never seen before. The report introduced a new development regime with the term "sustainable development", and thereby warned against the ongoing unsustainable development.

Several thousand researchers have since been involved in a massive effort to assemble knowledge that has been published regularly, especially in the periods prior to important global decisions. The first major report of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on

Climate Change appeared in 1990 and laid the foundation for the adoption of the 1992 Climate Convention. The next report, in 1995, appeared up to the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. And in 2007, The Fourth Assessment Report became an important part of the basis for the attempt to obtain a global agreement at the 2009 COP15 summit in Copenhagen. As we know, this effort did not produce the desired results. The most recent report, The Fifth Assessment Report appeared in 2013–14, as a prelude to the 2015 Paris summit. At present, we are waiting for the sixth report, which is being prepared and will be published in 2021–22, prior to the submission of the next set of national climate targets and plans in 2025.

The issue of whether climate change is man-made has been addressed, and one can still follow the increasingly more certain wording in the various reports of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel

on Climate Change. However, there remains a major disparity between the long public discussion on the subject and the statements by researchers. Up to 1990, the message was that the greenhouse effect was due, to a significant degree, to human activity. Over the years, the degree of certainty has become larger and larger. The 5th report's summary for policymakers states that "it is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century".

The 2014 report is based on data collected up to 2012. It is thick and scientific, but there exists a summary for policymakers. Among other things, the summary states that the area of sea ice in the Arctic region from 1979 to 2012 has declined by between 3.5

and 4.1 per cent per decade. Moreover, the water level in the oceans will rise by between 26 and 98 centimetres by the year 2100, if one examines all the different scenarios. The concentration of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is now higher than at any other time in the previous 800,000 years. Global CO₂ emissions must be reduced by 40–70 per cent between 2010 and 2050 and should be zero around year 2100 if we are to limit the temperature increase to two degrees in this century. Above 90 per cent of the accumulated energy in recent decades has been absorbed by the oceans, which have also become warmer down to 700 meters in depth. And, finally, we read that the earth's temperature will most likely rise 0.3 to 0.7 degrees in the period 2016–2035.

Is the challenge even greater?

Professor Sebastian Mernild takes the floor:

By Sebastian H. Mernild, Professor of Climate Change and Glaciology (Ph.D. and Dr. Scient.) and Managing Director of the Nansen Center in Bergen.

“ Today's level of greenhouse gases is significantly above the maximum values found in the ice cores over the last 800,000 years, about 40 per cent higher. From the same ice cores, we can deduce that at no time has the CO₂ content in the atmosphere changed as fast as is the case now. The amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere over the past decades has increased by an average of 2 ppm (parts per million, the unit for the number of CO₂ molecules in the air), equivalent to 0.5 per cent per year, whereas the increase during the 1960s and 1970s was on average 1 ppm.

This means that the atmospheric content of CO₂ is rising at the same time that global emissions of CO₂ into the atmosphere now seem to be stagnant, following decades of strong growth in emissions. **As illustration, this situation can be equated with the water level in a bathtub rising because the faucet has been opened, but at least the faucet is not opened any further.**

The increased CO₂ content in the atmosphere is the main cause of the climate change that we are now experiencing and which will be reinforced for many decades, even for centuries, to come. We know that CO₂

has a long lifespan in the atmosphere, so the content will not decline quickly by itself, even with a stagnant, lessened or possibly complete cessation of emissions in the near future.

We know that the average temperature of the globe up to the record-breaking warmth in 2016 has risen by 1.2 degrees Celsius since the time before the Industrial Revolution, which marked the beginning of systematic CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere. And because of the heat absorption in the oceans, there is a considerable delay in global warming compared to the rapidly growing amounts of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The mean temperature is at least half a degree lower than would be indicated by the current level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Human-caused climate changes, therefore, do not belong only in the distant future. They are occurring here and now, and the physical changes are becoming on average more dramatic for each year that passes. The changes are occurring more rapidly today than they did just ten years ago. The effects of a warmer climate are clearly visible.

As the emissions and conditions are at present, we are far off the optimistic scenario. Rather, we are experiencing something that is best compared to a worst-case scenario, where there are indications of a further increase of 3.2–5.4 degrees in 2100 compared to the present situation.

“ The task is to press the emissions level sharply downward, ideally to zero, over the next two decades. Otherwise, the two-degree UN target will not be realistically achievable. Climate and energy policy must therefore be ambitious and sufficient and must clearly contribute to reducing the growth of CO₂ in the atmosphere. Only then can we demonstrate a breakthrough in the ongoing green transformation.

Sebastian H. Mernild



FOTO: SEBASTIAN MERNILD

Examples:

- Since 1979, the Arctic summer sea ice sheet has shrunk in area by an average of 92,000 km² a year, or twice the entire land area of Denmark. It is expected that the summer sea ice sheet will be gone in 15–20 years, around the time when we pass the 1.5 degrees global warming threshold. The sea ice sheet area in December 2016 and January 2017 was the lowest amount measured for the season in both the Arctic and around Antarctica. The temperature over the North Pole during autumn-winter months of 2016–2017 has been 20 degrees above normal for the season.
- The mass loss from Greenland's inland ice sheet and from the enormous Antarctic ice cover has accelerated since the 1980s, so that annually, there now flows 350 cubic kilometres of ice and meltwater into the sea from Greenland alone, and slightly less from Antarctica. It is expected that in the coming decades, the inland ice surface will reach a "tipping point" such that the amount of snow and ice that melts away from the inland ice surface during the summer will be greater than the snow fall in winter. This is already happening before we hit the two-degree global warming threshold, where the contribution to the annual outflow of ice and meltwater will correspondingly, nearly double.

What has been decided in the Paris Agreement, in the EU and in the Nordic region?

The Paris Agreement is a comprehensive treaty system in which the crucial balance between developed and developing countries, the so called North and South, which was already a key element in the Brundtland Report, has been maintained. The core is the concept of sustainable development. Sustainable development means that there should be room for both economic and social sustainable development and at the same time, a reduction of climate and environmental impacts. The agreement also ensures that the South will have the space – and help – to develop a viable standard of living, while the North reduces its climate impact and develops technologies and methods that can be transferred to the South. In addition, the commitments have been made for increased economic transfers from north to south.

In the course of this process, agreement has been reached on a series of elements, such as the crucial political benchmarks that can ensure that the temperature increase in this century will remain below two degrees. This threshold was agreed upon at COP13 in 2007. The target was set based on assessments that if the temperature

increase becomes higher, climate change will be completely unmanageable for the international community – it is difficult enough already – and the temperature could increase exponentially.

With the Paris Agreement, the ambition increased significantly. The goal is now to keep the temperature increase well below two degrees compared to the pre-industrial level, and to even strive to keep it down to 1.5 degrees. This is an immensely difficult task, when the numbers show that the record warm year of 2016 showed a temperature increase of 1.2 degrees.

The Paris Agreement will take effect from 2020 and will then be strengthened every five years with increasingly ambitious objectives. By 2023, the countries must assess their progress and any potential shortcomings, before the new climate plans are submitted in 2025.

Each country must submit its own nationally determined targets and climate change measures to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and in October 2017, 162 countries have submitted plans. In addition, funds must be raised from

the developed countries for climate change initiatives for the world's poorest countries. The important agreement from the 2009 Copenhagen climate summit, that the developed countries should transfer USD 100 billion to developing countries each year beginning in 2020, is thus a part of the agreement. It has also been agreed that further efforts should be made to identify how the world's countries can jointly cope with the losses and damages that climate change has already caused – and will cause in the future – in the least developed countries.

The Paris Agreement is a major and important agreement, but it also contains obvious shortcomings. This is primarily because the climate plans that the countries have submitted will lead to a temperature rise of about three degrees if they are not strengthened significantly. This is also because the agreement first takes effect in 2020, such that there is an excessively long wait until the revised and intensified 2025 plans can take effect. The possibility to hold the temperature increase down to 1.5 degrees may simply disappear by 2025. Therefore,

the agreement has also included a number of "political hooks", which create new opportunities to accelerate action. First and foremost, this involves an opportunity to review the situation in 2018 at COP24. Next, there is an opportunity to submit more ambitious climate plans in 2020.

In EU cooperation, climate has played a major role for a long time, and over the years, the EU has played a significant and leading role in obtaining results in the international climate negotiations within the UN framework. The EU has had a common climate policy for many years, with several overall goals and themes decided upon. By 2050, for example, greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced by between 80 per cent and 95 per cent of 1990 levels. The EU supports the construction of electrical grids between countries in order to, among other things, facilitate the inclusion of growing supply of renewable energy. There are targets for expansion of renewable energy and a common energy-saving policy. Also, an energy union is in the works. Therefore, all 28 EU countries submit their emission reduction targets together.

The EU countries have thus committed themselves to implementing a 40 per cent reduction of total emissions by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. In addition, there are targets for expansion of renewable energy of 27 per cent by 2030 and an indicative target of a 27 per cent improvement in energy efficiency.

In the EU, two systems are operating. One is the quota sector, the EU emissions trading system (EU ETS), where purchases and sales of CO₂ emissions allowances shall regulate emissions. This sector includes large industries, power plants, etc. The other system covers other sectors of the economy, the so-called non-ETS sectors, where regulation is carried out in a different way. These sectors include e.g. cars, agriculture and dwellings.

The overall targets in the non-ETS sectors are distributed among member countries after a negotiation process. The EEA countries, Norway and Iceland, have politically acceded to the EU's objectives, just as they are both part of the EU ETS system. In this way, all the

Nordic countries now share a number of crucial decisions, despite their differing ties to the EU.

In Nordic cooperation, climate has also become quite high on the agenda. In 2017, the Nordic Prime Ministers took the initiative toward a more integrated climate and energy effort. Jorma Ollila has prepared a comprehensive report for the Nordic Council of Ministers, containing a number of recommendations for the Nordic governments regarding greatly-expanded energy cooperation. In addition, climate plays a significant role in the ongoing co-operation among the Nordic climate ministers, in Nordic research institutions and in the priorities of the Nordic Development Fund. The Nordic countries now also have a common pavilion at the climate summits. In recent years, Nordic parliamentarians have worked more closely together at the climate summits, just as the Nordic Council's Committee for a Sustainable Nordic Region has established contacts with members of the national climate and environment committees on special topics.

Forthcoming crucial international events, and how climate parliamentarians can work

Globally

- The annual UN climate summit meetings will normally take place between mid-November to mid-December.

There is a tradition of attendance by parliamentarians from all the Nordic countries and autonomous regions, so it will often be a good idea to organise parliamentary initiatives before the meetings and before the government's negotiating mandate has been established. The meetings are also a good networking site.

- The IPCC Special Report on the 1.5 degree target will appear in September 2018. It will form the basis for the discussion up to COP24 later in 2018.

The report will therefore be important and a good starting point for initiatives up to the meeting.

- **COP24 will be especially important** because it was agreed upon in Paris that the 2018 meeting should be the first stock-taking conference. That is, the world's countries will be assessing

the impact of their collective effort and allow room for information on further action.

This means that it is possible to take a new course of action during 2018. It is expected that researchers and NGOs will place very high priority on 2018. This is primarily because it was acknowledged already in 2015 that the actions are very late getting started, and that the countries' current climate targets do not correspond to the climate necessity. Particularly not if the goal is to keep the temperature increases down to 1.5 degrees.

- In September 2019, the IPCC will issue a special report on the oceans because there is a steadily increasing concern about the consequences of the acidification of our large ocean areas and also what the consequences will be when the oceans can no longer absorb more CO₂.

The report will be an important prelude to the main report in 2022, and it may become a game changer in understanding the need for a significantly greater effort already in the coming decade.

- By 2020, all countries must either confirm or revise current targets and climate plans, and the level of ambition must not be lowered.

This means that up to the 2020 climate summit, work should be carried out on further developing and enhancing targets and climate plans.

- In 2021, three IPCC working groups will issue reports on, respectively, the scientific basis for the climate problem, the impact of climate change and on climate adaptation and vulnerability and mitigation. All three reports form parts of the sixth main report.

They will be well-suited to ensuring attention to the urgency of the situation and the risk of an inadequate effort.

- The synthesis of the IPCC's sixth report will be published in 2022 and will form the basis for the decisions to be taken in 2025.

The sixth report should therefore be accorded very great attention, as the basis for enrolling in the new, intensified climate plans in 2025. The report will become crucial because at

that time, it is perhaps the absolutely last call for reinforcing climate action to a degree that will make it possible to achieve the 1.5 degree target.

In EU and Nordic cooperation

- In EU cooperation, more priority has been given to energy cooperation with the establishment of an Energy Union on the way, and negotiation is taking place regarding the content of the fourth period (from 2021 to 2030) of the emissions trading system, in which all the Nordic countries participate. This will be an important negotiation because the efficiency of the emissions trading system today has been significantly weakened by the allocation of too many quotas. In the Nordic context, discussions are taking place regarding the coordination of efforts, joint research and closer climate- and energy political cooperation. And perhaps most importantly: The Nordic countries obtain inspiration from each other. Often in a mutual competitive struggle.

What is new is that EU decisions and decisions taken in cooperation between the EU and the EEA countries will become much more important for all the Nordic countries in the years to come and should therefore be closely monitored in all the Nordic parliaments. Furthermore, it is good to know that it is quite convincing to be able to refer to results in other European countries. Coming from the Nordic countries, it even has an additional impact. Therefore, it can be a good investment to follow the legislative process and the political debate in the other countries. This can be done in many ways. Good contacts that inform about initiatives, but do not over-inform, are among the most effective.

With shipping and aviation

- The Paris Agreement does not regulate greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping or aviation, despite the valiant efforts on the part of the Nordic countries. Within the IMO, discussions have taken place on the impact of shipping on CO₂ emissions, and within the air

transport sector, the issue has been discussed within the ICAO. Domestic air traffic is subject to the EU quota system, and some countries also have passenger charges. Globally, it has been decided that there should be a market-based regulation of international aviation beginning in 2021. In the shipping area, a roadmap will be adopted in 2018 which seeks the adoption of a global system for monitoring, fuel consumption and more. The EU has also adopted a regulation on the monitoring of CO₂ emissions from ships in the EU and ships to and from the EU. This regulation will take effect in January 2018.

Shipping and aviation are often forgotten when discussing climate. One of the reasons is that these areas are typically regulated by other ministries than the ministries for climate and environment. However, they are very important for global CO₂ emissions. It will therefore be appropriate to request ongoing updates of the negotiation processes and ensure debate on the government's negotiating position and initiatives.



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Challenges facing the Nordic countries

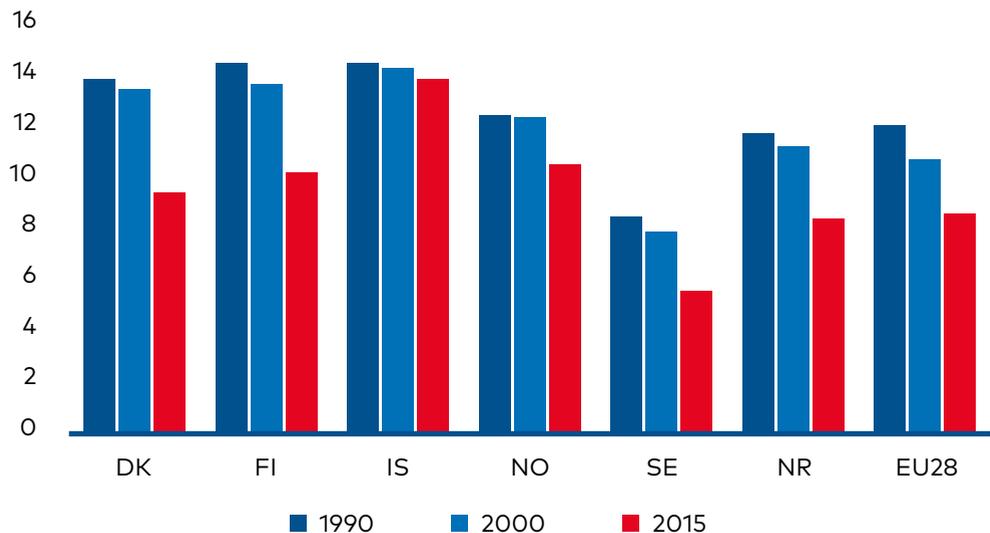
Emissions and reductions

In the Nordic countries, one often encounters the view that the Nordic region occupies a top position with regards to climate and that the countries have practically already met the challenge of climate change.

Therefore, it is important to have knowledge of the statistics for emissions. The graph below highlights the key data, namely, the size of CO₂ emissions per each Nordic citizen and the size of the emissions reductions achieved in the Nordic countries since 1990.

Greenhouse emission per capita in the Nordic countries and EU as a whole 1990, 2000 and 2015

CO₂ equivalent in tons



Source: Nordisk Statistics, 2017, Nordic Council of Ministers. Showing emissions per capita in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, as an average for the Nordic population as a whole and for the EU.

On average, the Nordic region emits just under 9 tonnes of CO₂ equivalents per inhabitant. Everyone in the Nordic region thus leaves behind a very large carbon footprint.

The data on CO₂ emissions per capita also play a significant role in global negotiations. It is important to understand that the negotiations – seen from the perspective of the developing countries – are not just about the Nordic region's major CO₂ reductions. Developing countries with low emissions will naturally focus on rich countries' high emissions. And the most vulnerable countries – which are most often the poorest – are naturally enough taking the lead to include that theme, which in the negotiations up to the Paris Agreement concerned "loss and damage". In general, it is a good idea to have the current statistical data in mind. For example, that Bangladesh has an emission of only 0.5 tonnes per inhabitant per year, China has 7.5 tons, USA 16.8 tons and Tanzania 0.2 tonnes (according to the Global Carbon Atlas).

When it comes to reductions in CO₂ emissions and support and initiatives to reinforce and streamline global

climate efforts, the Nordic countries are clearly at the forefront. The Nordic countries are also leading in terms of development assistance. This means that Nordic parliamentarians encounter a very large amount of goodwill in all climate contexts: when meeting with colleagues and NGOs from the developing countries, with the most active global NGOs, and in relation to green businesses. **This is a truly unique position for a parliamentarian who wants to establish contacts and push for rapid green transformation.**

The key sectors

The Nordic countries have developed a quite uniform way of dealing with the challenges of climate change, and all have played important roles in global climate negotiations.

With a large common energy market, the Nordic countries have a major opportunity to reach the forefront of the development of future systems for an integrated and innovative energy system. It will be based on many different forms of production of climate-friendly energy, energy storage

and smart consumption. This will all be linked together by stronger network connections. The many new possibilities are described in Jorma Ollila's proposal to the Nordic Council of Ministers.

As for the most difficult challenges, they also look amazingly the same.

These challenges are clearly described in the International Energy Agency's (IEA) and the Nordic Energy Research's publication *Nordic Energy Technology Perspectives 2016*. The first challenge is to increase the flexibility of the Nordic energy system. Second, there is a need to create closer Nordic and broader European cooperation on far-stronger infrastructure across borders. Third, a special effort is needed to limit process-related emissions. And fourth, there is a need to accelerate the effort to make the transport sector CO₂-free.

To this can be added that the Nordic countries still have a lot to gain by saving energy. In addition, the entire agricultural and forestry area is a challenge because there is a very large amount of greenhouse gas emissions from intensive agriculture and livestock. There are also opportunities for farming and forestry to absorb more CO₂.

One can conclude that the information from the current reports is quite clear. Together, the Nordic countries should all focus on:

- Full speed on expanding renewable energy and developing the next generation common energy market. Now also aimed wider in Europe
- The transport system must be made independent of fossil fuels at a very great pace
- Heavy industry must be actively included in the green transformation
- Agriculture must also deliver

Climate legislation

Therefore, the question arises as to whether there is sufficient legislation in the Nordic countries and whether there is an ideal form of legislation. In Cicero's (the Norwegian Center for Climate Research) 2016 report to the

Nordic Council, the Nordic countries' climate legislation was described in a table. The table is reproduced below, supplemented with information about the new climate laws in Sweden and Norway.

Key elements of enacted climate laws in the Nordic countries

	Area of coverage		Target		Process		Direct regulation	
	EMISSION REDUCTIONS	CLIMATE ADAPTATION	TARGETS MANDATED BY LAW	PROCESS FOR TARGETS	ADVISORY BODY	REPORTING TO PARLIAMENT	EU ETS	OTHER REGULATION
	✓	—	—	See note 1	✓	✓	—	—
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	See note 2	—
	✓	✓	See note 3	—	✓	—	✓	✓
	✓	—	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—
	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—

Source: Cicero, Klimapolitikk i Norden, report 2016:07, with added information for Sweden and Norway, who have since passed climate laws.

1 Partially included: In preparing the Act, the Folketing requires that the Minister present national climate targets at least every 5 years. It is also an understanding that the established 2020 target forms the basis for the law. However, these elements are not included in the text itself

2 The Finnish Climate Act explicitly indicates that the EU ETS is regulated by other laws and specifies that the emissions reduction plans mentioned in the Act apply to sectors outside the EU ETS.

3 Partially Included: The Icelandic Climate Act mandates that the government at all times meet reduction obligations at the international level.

As can be seen, all the Nordic countries have quite comprehensive legislation, and now, after Sweden and Norway have adopted their climate legislation, all five countries have such legislation in place. The laws are constructed more or less according to the same template as the British law, which was passed in 2008.

It will therefore be appropriate to ask Lord Deben, Chairman of the British Climate Committee, to assess the significance of strong climate legislation.

Lord Deben takes the floor:

Lord Deben has a long carrier in environmental politics, and has been UK's longest-serving secretary of state for the environment. He is now chairman for The Committee on Climate Change in the U.K.

“ The UK is very fortunate to have tough climate legislation. It's not prescriptive in detail – it simply forces the Government to act to meet the series of five-year carbon budgets fixed at the level recommended by the Committee on Climate Change. This entirely independent committee announces these budgets well in advance – we've already planned them up to 2032. The budgets detail the sequential steps necessary to ensure we cut our emissions by 80 per cent by 2050, and they are enshrined in law and therefore have to be met. The system is simple but it makes sure Governments don't put off the actions we need to take because they are politically inconvenient. The system has strong all-party support; invented by the Conservatives; enacted by Labour; and strongly supported by Liberal Democrats and Nationalists. It shows just how effective tough, consistent, and continuing legislation can be.



Anders Wijkman was chairman of the cross-party committee that laid the groundwork for Sweden's new climate

policy framework. He therefore provides valuable and interesting insight into climate legislation.

Anders Wijkman takes the floor:

Wijkman is co-president of the Club of Rome and president of Climate KIC – the EU's public-private climate innovation initiative. He is a former Member of the European Parliament and the Swedish Parliament.

“ The most important was to ensure that all committee members had the same level of knowledge and a similar perception of the challenges. At the beginning of the process, we thus devoted a lot of time to listening to facts and meeting representatives from across all relevant sectors. A particularly important question was how the rapid technology development – digital technology, nanotechnology and biotechnology – would affect us and the capacity to shape and implement climate policy.

It is of utmost importance to define clear goals and to stipulate that minimal climate impact should be a key objective of all important policy areas, as well as to ensure that the government draws up a detailed action plan every four years. Abolishing a law is much more complicated than changing a parliamentary decision. Therein lies the main difference.

The legislation provides a foundation for action by all committed parliamentarians. A climate policy council should be set up to continuously assess the government's actions – and suggest alternatives to government policies – this will be beneficial to the effort. Moreover, the council's reports can be used when addressing interpellation and posing questions to the government.



FOTO: A. WUKMAN



FOTO: SCANPIX

The key working tools

Climate legislation with clear climate targets

It is important that climate legislation also establishes clear climate targets with ceilings for emissions for both long-term and for shorter periods. Of course, the most certain strategy is that these goals form part of the actual law text. In this way, it will be more difficult to dilute already agreed upon targets, and the targets – especially the more short-term – will therefore become crucial in the annual political priority campaigns on, among other things, the budget.

Climate legislation with independent climate councils

Independent climate councils will strengthen legislation precisely because they must follow the area closely and present proposals to the government and parliament. The council must be committed to the goals which a majority in Parliament have endorsed. It must be equipped with sufficient professional knowledge so that the proposals are well-calculated and the effects documented. In this way, the climate council will participate in the public debate and in the political process to ensure that the goals are fulfilled.

The annual recommendations should be timed so that they can be included in budget decisions and overall climate-related decisions. In this way, the recommendations will be an important and continuous part of the work. This means that each year, the parliamentary committee responsible for climate will have a significant partner in the effort.

Budgeting and finance laws

The annual budget must of course reflect the ever-increasing climate involvement. And here the parliamentarians are on their home turf. It is the allocation of money that governs, and therefore it is about ensuring resources for the many initiatives that are needed. Energy and climate research, climate assistance, contributions to international institutions, resources for expanding renewable energy, storage, smart energy and energy savings, as well as initiatives within transport, emissions from industrial processing and agriculture. In addition, there must be sufficient financial resources to fulfil the decision that, from 2020, the rich part of the world will transfer USD 100 billion a year to the developing countries as assistance in dealing with climate change and green transformation.

Coherence and green accounts

Coherence is about ensuring consistency between long-term climate goals and other policy areas. We often observe contradictory laws and clashes between different goals. Transport policy, for example, is filled with such contradictions. A parliamentarian can ensure the illumination of these clashes by always asking for an assessment of new proposals and the importance of the initiatives for the climate. Similarly, calculations as to which sectors and policies can thwart the objectives can be easily obtained and then included in the political debate and parliamentary priorities.

As the UN and the EU are working to spread green national accounts, it will also be obvious to prioritize developing it into a new instrument. With a green national account in place, it will be easy to calculate the impact of all economic decisions on the climate accounts, just as green national accounts can provide a basis for preparing CO₂ budgets. In this way, climate will be part of the annual discussions about the budget with significantly greater weight than today.

How do you become a climate clever parliamentarian?

A few tips

- 1.** Make your own climate calendar with the dates when reports are expected, the most important international meetings held, recommendations released from the climate council, NGOs, green companies, etc. Update your calendar periodically – Use it to create continuity in your political initiatives.
- 2.** Always build on knowledge from reports, researchers, etc. The climate area is often subjected to counter-arguments based upon feelings and not on facts, even though reality may look completely different. The IPCC has assembled and published scientific knowledge that contains the arguments for action. It is the most comprehensive scientific collection of facts combined with the construction of better and better computer models – the best ever made in connection with a convention.
- 3.** Create your own informal network among colleagues. Preferably also across party lines and ideally including colleagues from both governing parties and non-governing parties. It can also be official networks, but they can be difficult to establish. So let it primarily be your own personal network.
- 4.** Make sure you have close contact with the NGO community and the green actors in the business sector. Make your office an open place for climate-committed actors. Listen and learn, but decide yourself. Do not allow others to dictate your initiatives.

5. Build up a good network outside the country's borders. It is often easier to establish networks across party lines internationally than within one's own country. And precisely the inter-party and transnational aspect is a special strength in the climate area. It can often count quite a lot in the public debate if a new initiative has already been adopted in another country.

- A Nordic network is the most obvious. It is easy to communicate together, and there is a certain pre-existing knowledge of each other's countries. The Nordic countries are expected to establish even closer cooperation in the climate field in the coming years, and at global meetings there will often be an opportunity to act jointly. This is in line with the joint arrangements that have been organised for Nordic parliamentarians in recent years. In contacts with parliamentarians outside the Nordic region, it will often be advantageous to be able to refer to a Nordic network. Viewed from the outside, it is not always easy for outsiders to distinguish the individual countries from each other.

- A European network will come next. First and foremost, because the EU and EEA countries are working with the same objectives. It is therefore evident that in the EU system's annual calendar and schedules, crucial knowledge can be obtained – just as many relevant reports are produced and many initiatives undertaken. Make especially sure to get in contact with one or more members of the European Parliament. Invite and ask for ongoing information or just the occasional contact, which makes it easier for you to phone each other.
- For Nordic parliamentarians, a global network can often start with developing countries. Especially with those countries with which the Nordic countries cooperate closely. The global network can be used in parliament when discussing aid programmes and their content. Is climate adaptation included? Does my country help to make climate plans? And do we ensure that the proposed aid initiatives follow the Paris Agreement and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals? These are obvious questions to ask.

Contacts can be established at the annual climate summits, to which an increasing number of developing countries and regional parliaments also send representatives. The same applies to study trips to countries with development assistance programmes, participation in the delegations to the UN annual General Assembly and through the International Parliamentary Union (IPU), where in recent years the focus on climate and climate adaptation has been stepped up.

At the grassroots level for parliamentarians, the Global Legislators Organization for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE) gathers climate-active parliamentarians across the political spectrum and from many countries. GLOBE was founded in 1989 and works throughout the world. It has offices in Mexico and Brussels. Other organizations, such as the E-Parliament, work with parliamentary cooperation on climate and renewable energy.

6. Find current knowledge about other countries' climate legislation. Grantham Institute at the London School of Economics has assembled knowledge about legislation around the world. It is – besides a comprehensive documentation in order for legislators to take on responsibility – the only place where so much knowledge about climate legislation has been collected.

7. Build wide alliances on climate issues and involve both representatives from business and the trade unions, if possible. All too often, resistance to climate initiatives is associated with a fear that jobs will be lost. Therefore, collect as much knowledge as possible about green job creation, where goal-oriented efforts for renewable energy, energy savings and circular economics have created new sustainable jobs.

8. Try to get the main lines of the national climate policy to be politically broad-based so that everything does not suddenly change with a change of government. This task can be difficult, because it is also important that there is competition among the parties on goals and funds. But the most important thing is to establish durable, long-term agreements. Here, the decisions at EU level as well as the requirement in the Paris Agreement on intensifying the ambitions every five years help. But there is a lot more to do. Hence, a lot of effort should be directed toward concluding agreements that will not be scrapped when the government changes. It is also about companies being able to count on their investment opportunities for a number of years in the future. And there is a need for billions in private investment funds.

9. The most important task for climate parliamentarians is to create broad public understanding of the climate challenges and the necessary instruments. It requires a well-founded balance between, on the one hand, the many opportunities created by the climate initiative and, on the other hand, the harsh situation that we must face up to. The link between climate action and job creation, innovation and modernization must be combined with information about the risk of more uncertainty, serious refugee problems and massive expenditures for climate adaptation. It is important and necessary to raise the voice, but also to do it the right way.

Views from Nordic parliamentarians

Robert Marshall, former Member of Parliament in Iceland and the Nordic Council

“ It has been exactly one year since I left parliament after a ten-year career as a politician. During that decade, there was a significant shift in the attitude of the public when it came to global warming. I still regret, however, that I did not use stronger language in my work on this issue. We still have so far to go. And what is at stake is so extremely important for future generations. I wish I had spent more time on climate change and less time on the day-to-day skirmish of everyday politics that resulted in nothing.

I think we should spend more money on informing the public and getting people involved in the many solutions available. I think every country should have a committee on global warming, like in the UK, which has an educational role and also a follow-up role to make sure that governments and municipalities are holding up their end of international agreements.

The biggest challenge is the everyday special interests of businesses that refuse to partake in this global challenge. A part of that problem is politicians who refuse to acknowledge scientific data. The only way to tackle them is by informing the public and staying focused on what's important and using every tool available to get the message across. As an editor and a publisher of an outdoor magazine and a working mountain guide in Iceland, I am reminded almost every day of what the changes on our planet are doing to our glaciers. A global catastrophe is around the corner if we do not do more.





Satu Hassi,
Member of Parliament in Finland

Chairwoman for the Environment Committee, former minister and former Member of the European Parliament.

“ For me, the biggest difficulty is the fact that most people seem not to realize the magnitude and urgency of the problem – or crisis. Maybe this is because there is no historic experience of climate change, what it means for societies, families and individuals. The second difficulty is business lobbying, which is very much made possible by the first mentioned problem.

What is needed is long and shorter term emission ceilings with ambitions in line with the climate science. To eradicate subsidies for fossils and practices that are harmful for climate protection. And create markets and strong incentives for climate-friendly technologies and solutions.

Climate policy is not a policy sector; climate protection means fundamental changes in several policy sectors, if not all. In the real world it's not possible to solve either climate or global poverty, we must solve both. My experience is that hard political work is crucial. I played a role in the negotiations which led to agreement on more detailed rules for the Kyoto Protocol, later known as The Marrakech Accords, which made The Kyoto Protocol rectifiable for industrialized countries. And in the European Parliament, I was one of the MEPs pushing through higher climate ambition in EU decision-making.

**Matilda Ernkrans,
Member of Parliament in Sweden**

Chairwoman for the Committee on Environment and Agriculture

“ I was very proud when Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, in the yearly declaration of the government, announced that Sweden would become the world's first fossil-free welfare country. It is a very bold goal. The historic agreement on our new climate policy framework will be an important means to achieve this. The framework contains a long-term goal of reducing climate emissions by 85 per cent by 2045, a climate law and the establishment of a committee on climate change.

I myself had the privilege of participating in the negotiations between the parties that concluded the agreement. A key success factor was the fact that the two biggest parties in parliament, from both sides of the aisle – the Social Democrats and the Moderate Party – decided that Sweden needed such an agreement. And that people within these parties had the courage to bring them to the negotiation table. It was also of crucial importance that the world agreed upon the Paris Agreement, and this gave us the last push in order to finalize the agreement in Sweden.

The political battle for the climate is now instead about the budget. Unfortunately, mobilising sufficient funds to fulfil the climate commitment has not followed the same good pattern. The budget from the red-green government for 2018 contains the biggest investment in climate and environment that any Swedish government has ever made, and I hoped that all the parties would support it. However, that is not the case. As I see the future battle for climate, it will be about the level of investments.



FOTO: RIKSDAGEN I SVERIGE.



Jens Joel,
Member of Parliament in Denmark

“ In Bangladesh, I've visited families whose homes were regularly flooded and who saved their children by tying them to trees when storms and high water levels struck. In China, I've seen urban communities converted to green district heating because it gave them a better life. And in West Jutland, I've met industrial workers who have a job to wake up to each day because their companies provide sustainable solutions.

The first experience is the reason why we're morally and politically obliged to act. The last two are the reasons why we'll succeed. Climate policy is no longer driven only by fear of what's happening in the world's poorest countries and for our children and grandchildren's globe if we fail to transform our society in time.

Climate policy now also deals with the new opportunities for cleaner air in our cities and more jobs, as the world's investments turn in a green direction.

I believe in international climate cooperation. There's a need for political pressure. But in the negotiations, the arguments about new opportunities have a much greater appeal than fear. And when it comes to practice, it's far more valuable that Denmark and the EU can provide a technical solution and a product that works than what we've said to developing and emerging economies during the negotiations.



Ola Elvestuen, Member of Parliament in Norway and Chair of the Standing Committee on Energy and the Environment

“ If there is one thing we have succeeded with in climate policy in Norway, it is getting more zero-emission cars out onto our roads. It gets the emissions down, makes the air cleaner and allows people to save money they would otherwise spend on petrol and diesel. But it is a success that has required hard work over a long period of time. There are especially three things I have learned from working with Norwegian electric car policy over several decades, which I hope may be of use to climate politicians who work with other issues in other countries.

Things take time, but realistic goals will be achieved. There is nothing easier for a political body than to adopt an ambitious goal, and there is nothing easier for an environmental party than to have an election campaign based on raising the bar a bit higher. But the goals themselves contribute absolutely nothing to cutting emissions. Only concrete measures can do this, and it is often more difficult to get a majority for these, especially if they are at the expense of something, whether

it is government revenue or people's desire to drive a car everywhere. Therefore, the goals we set ourselves must be realistic and be built upon a solid, professional foundation. If the politicians adopt a goal that the experts view as completely impossible to reach, nobody will work to get as close to the goal as possible. We politicians must give the experts time, space and, especially, a realistic opportunity to reach the goals we adopt. Otherwise we will get nowhere.

Everyone must be able to contribute, and all contributions must be important.

The Norwegian electric vehicle success story has come as a result of political decisions in the Storting (The Norwegian Parliament), but also in a number of municipalities and county councils across the country. It is much easier to get people on board if there is something concrete with which they can contribute. If a city politician in my party wants to increase the proportion of electric cars in his municipality, they can do something themselves to make it happen, At the same time, I can help them get more instruments through my position in the Storting. All politicians want to succeed with what they are working on, and we can do so only if all contributions are important.

You must never give up, and nothing is done before it is completed. The first time we decided to give special preferences for electric vehicles in Norway, we said they would last until 50,000 of them were sold in Norway. We have achieved that goal a while ago, but we have nevertheless continued the preferential benefits. Because they work, and because they are important for us to be able to continue to replace the fossil-fuel stock of vehicles at a rapid pace for many years to come. We have not reached the finish line just because the Storting adopts a goal that all cars sold in Norway after 2025 must be zero-emission cars, simply because there are still several years to 2025. The goal in itself is important but not nearly as important, or as difficult to reach, as the tools to achieve it.

Climate policy requires endurance, patience and a good dose of stubbornness. It requires us to tolerate being scolded, both when we succeed and when we don't succeed. But it is worth it. For the reward is a better world for those who come after us. It is worth fighting for, every day, every budget, every debate.



FOTO: UNSPLASH



FOTO: UNSPLASH

The long term

2018 will be an important year – three years after COP21. It will also be the year that focuses on the 1.5 degree goal and thereby the gap in the effort, which UN Environment pointed out at COP21. According to current prognoses we have today, researchers will present more warnings. The need for stronger reductions and greater efforts for climate adaptation is already more evident, at the same time as the discussion of the economic transfers from rich to poor countries will become more intense.

We need to think more long-term.
Precisely for this reason, we cannot wait.

The long term is now.

Abbreviations

The global discussion on climate includes many abbreviations and technical terms. For a climate parliamentarian, it is necessary to be familiar with these abbreviations and negotiation terms. We have therefore provided the list below. But it is also a good idea not to use these terms in the public debate, which is about getting everyone involved.

COP	Conference of the Parties
EEA	European Economic Area
ETS	Emissions Trading System
EU	European Union
GHG	Greenhouse gases including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, chlorofluorocarbons and hydrofluorocarbons
GLOBE	Global Legislators Organization for a Balanced Environment
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
LULUCF	Land Use Land Use Change and Forestry
NDC	National Determined Contributions
UNFCCC	United Framework Convention on Climate Change
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
IEA	International Energy Agency

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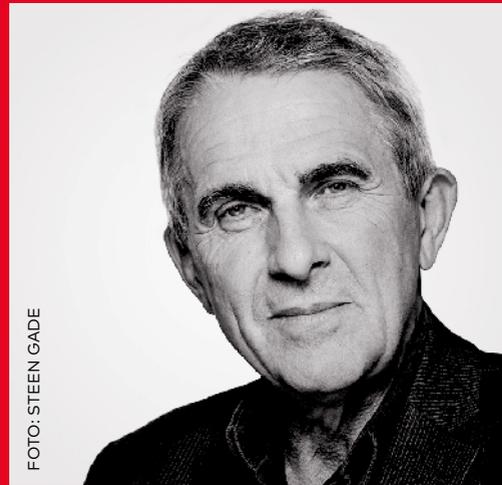
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About the author

For more than 30 years, Steen Gade has been active in climate and environmental issues. He has been a Danish climate and environmental politician, climate representative for the Nordic Council, Director of the Danish Environmental Protection Agency, Vice President of the European Environment Agency and active in GLOBE. He has participated in 14 climate summits, and today he works as an adviser to the Nordic Council in connection with the annual climate summits.



Nordic Council
Nordens Hus
Ved stranden 18
DK-1061 Copenhagen K
www.norden.org

The parliamentarians around the world find themselves faced with a major task of developing wise and effective climate legislation, which can maintain the world on course with the goals set by the Paris Agreement of 2015. Using legislation, the parliaments must hold the government firm on an overall climate goal. They must approve the laws that are a prerequisite for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and create an understanding among their respective voters for the measures deemed necessary to contribute to the solution to the challenge of climate change.

Unfortunately, there is no blueprint and definitive answer to the question of what constitutes good climate legislation. Fortunately, however, there are now many experiences upon which we can draw in order to reduce the risk that ambitions for good climate laws are not fulfilled. In this handbook for parliamentarians, Steen Gade, former MP in Denmark and former member of the Nordic Council, has collected some of the experiences of climate legislation and parliamentary climate work that has been carried out in the Nordic countries so far. The book contains some advice and tips on how to become a climate clever parliamentarian. The Nordic Council decided to publish this book in the hope that both current and future generations of parliamentarians in the Nordic countries, as well as in other countries, will be inspired and benefit from it, in the effort to limit the dangerous effects of global climate change.

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