



norden

Vision for the Nordic Council of Ministers

The Nordic Region – together we are stronger

“ We, the ministers for Nordic co-operation, are convinced of the value of continuing to work closely together at a time when globalisation, resource consumption and economic crisis pose challenges to the Nordic welfare model and regional co-operation is growing in importance.

“ The Nordic countries have a long tradition of trust-based co-operation stemming from our common historical, cultural and geographical heritage. Our national societies are also based on the same fundamental values, such as democracy, human rights and sustainability. Over the years, these positions of joint strength have been used to generate synergies and share experiences in a way that facilitates effective responses to a wide range of issues and provides benefits for the people of all of the Nordic countries. Ongoing efforts to guarantee the free movement of people, goods and services between the countries has helped boost national competitiveness. Working together also means that the Nordic Region exerts greater global influence. Together we are stronger.



»» Objectives

- Continuous renewal is a prerequisite if *co-operation* is to remain a powerful tool in the hands of the Nordic governments when faced with new political challenges.
- *Co-operation* must be dynamic enough to adapt continuously to the countries' needs and to the issues that concern the national governments.
- *Popular support* is crucial and will be achieved by focusing on real issues with a direct impact on the people of the Region.
- *Co-operation* must focus on initiatives that have a visible and quantifiable impact, and its profile in relation to the rest of the world must be clear so that the value of the Nordic identity is fully utilised.
- The role of *co-operation* in inter-Nordic and international affairs has to be politically relevant to the people of the Region, their MPs and governments. It must generate Nordic synergies, add value for all and lead to tangible political results.



»» Pillars

Freedom of movement

One of the key challenges faced by Nordic co-operation is to create the best possible conditions for people and companies to move freely between the countries. We will intensify our efforts, e.g. ensuring that new national legislation and the way in which the Nordic countries implement EU legislation do not create new barriers to freedom of movement in the Region.

Innovation

The Nordic Region is innovative, particularly in welfare, education, creativity, entrepreneurship, sustainability and research. We will continue to work closely together to enhance quality and to improve efficiency by tackling specific challenges faced by the people of the Region.

Visibility

The Nordic Region and the individual countries have strong profiles, and the Nordic brand/trademark is well known. Interest continues to grow in Nordic experiences of building and developing societies epitomised by high productivity, social security, gender equality and a healthy environment. We will continue to raise the profile of the countries globally in the “Team Norden” spirit. Enhanced global visibility has coincided with a fall in the level of knowledge about co-operation among the people of the Region. We will endeavour to ensure that everybody is informed about Nordic co-operation.

International engagement

Separately, the Nordic countries are small. Together, we have a population of 25 million and make up the 10th largest economy in the world. The Nordic countries are all active participants in numerous international forums. We will continue and improve co-ordination on international issues in areas where this is of mutual interest. We will strive to ensure that Nordic co-operation on international issues complements the forms of co-operation that take place in other organisations.



norden

Nordic Council of Ministers

Ved Stranden 18
DK-1061 Copenhagen K
www.norden.org

»» **Future developments**

The ministers for Nordic co-operation are responsible, on behalf of the prime ministers, for intergovernmental co-operation under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers. This declaration sets out our vision for Nordic co-operation as a whole. We will intensify our co-ordinating role in Nordic co-operation, for example by following up on these visions, and by modernising, publicising and raising the profile of Nordic co-operation. We will assume greater responsibility for co-ordinating the Nordic Council of Ministers' budget. The visions outlined here will also form the basis for ongoing work in conjunction with the Nordic Council and within civil society.

Politically dynamic co-operation calls for a modern and focused organisation. We have high expectations of the Secretary General's initiative to modernise the organisation and make it more modern, streamlined and effective. The Presidency, the Secretary General and the Nordic Council of Ministers' Secretariat will all be involved in formulating new initiatives, actively driving co-operation forward, maintaining its political relevance and deploying new tools to ensure that it retains its political dynamism.