

7 NORDIC TALES

2009



norden

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32. Greenland.com: p. 12. Lennart Perlenhem: p. 15, 16. Grete Kodi: p. 21, 22, 23.

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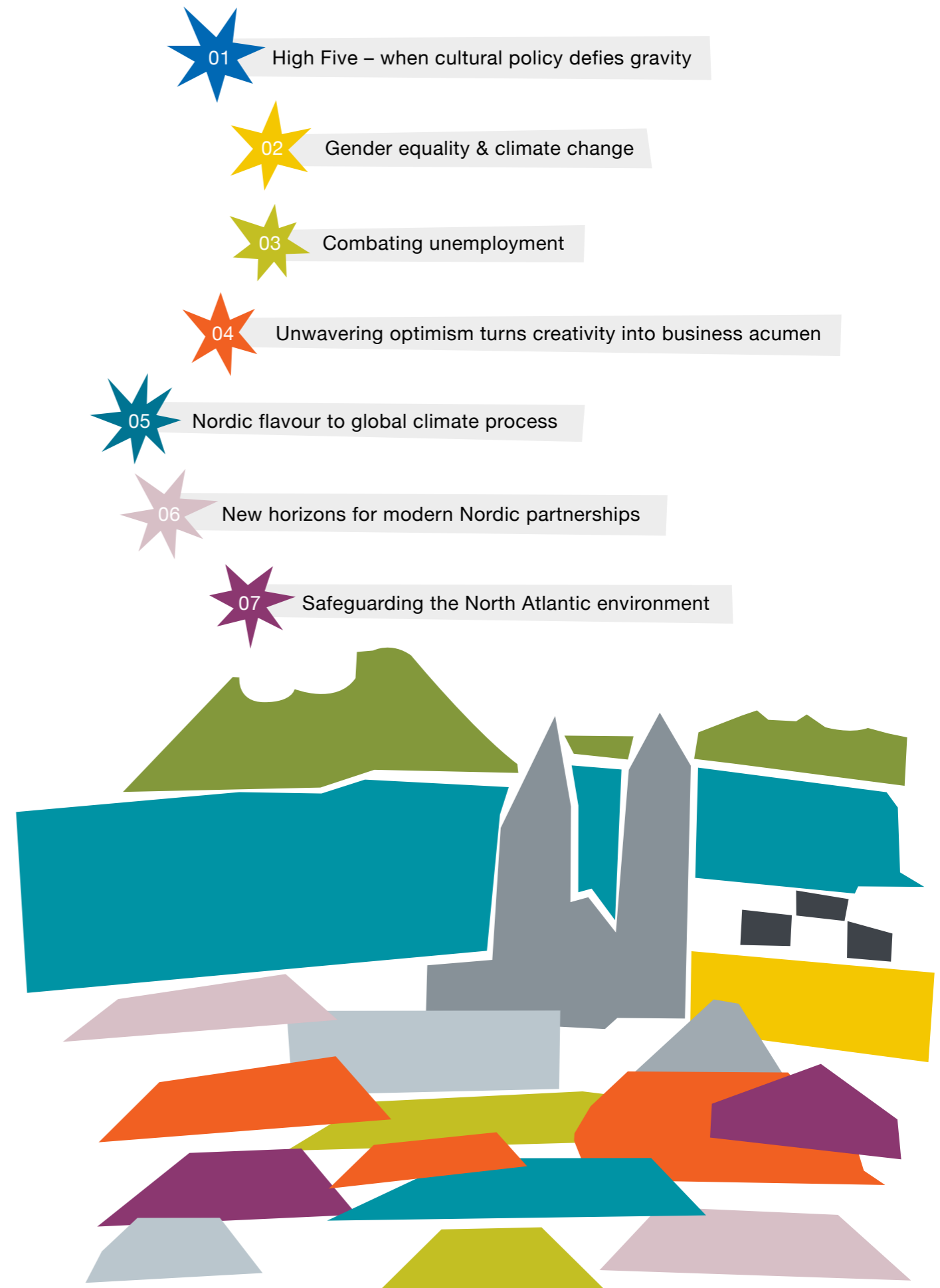
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Nordic co-operation

Nordic co-operation is one of the world's most extensive forms of regional collaboration, involving Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and three autonomous areas: the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland.

Nordic co-operation has firm traditions in politics, the economy, and culture. It plays an important role in European and international collaboration, and aims at creating a strong Nordic community in a strong Europe.

Nordic co-operation seeks to safeguard Nordic and regional interests and principles in the global community. Common Nordic values help the region solidify its position as one of the world's most innovative and competitive.





7 NORDIC TALES



Minister for Nordic
Co-operation 2009
Katrín Jakobsdóttir



President of the
Nordic Council 2009
Sinikka Bohlin

The fact that world has never been more closely integrated means that we need to seek joint approaches to the many challenges posed by the economic crisis, climate change and the security situation. In response to these challenges, the Nordic Region seeks to find common solutions to problems that know no national boundaries and to make a joint impact on the world around us.

The Seven Tales in this report exemplify the results achieved by Nordic co-operation in 2009. Each represents an example of how the Nordic countries work together to promote safety, security and development on all fronts, both in the Region itself and elsewhere.

With regard to security issues (in the broadest sense), the Nordic Council of Ministers and Nordic Council helped to promote dialogue and innovative thinking in 2009. Specifically, this was done via work on a long-overdue risk map of the North Atlantic. More generally, a report about closer co-operation on foreign policy by former Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Thorvald Stoltenberg has generated a great deal of debate among politicians and others.

The Nordic Region has succeeded in having a gender-equality perspective incorporated into the international climate agenda. In terms of social conditions (in the traditional sense), the Nordic countries advocate more open

societies, in particular emphasising the need for mobility, a more robust and inclusive labour market and the removal of obstacles to cross-border freedom of movement.

Promoting understanding of the Nordic languages is also important. In 2010, the Council of Ministers will be responsible for a campaign to draw attention to co-operation on languages, an issue that also features prominently on the Nordic Council's agenda.

The Region also continues, in collaboration with the creative industries at Nordic and global level, to promote Nordic values, products and culture through campaigns around the world. This work involves conventional cultural partnerships on film and other art forms as well as linking creativity, innovation and research with commercial initiatives.

The Seven Tales testify to a vibrant and forward-looking partnership that bodes well for the future. They highlight our ability to make a positive contribution to a global community that has a major need for constructive and practical solutions, an approach exemplified by the way in which the Nordic Council and Council of Ministers go about their business.

High Five – when cultural policy defies gravity



Hanne Palmquist

The Nordic Film & TV Fund's new funding scheme High Five does far more than just provide "travel expenses" for Nordic film. The result of five prime ministers' determination to defy the Region's gravity, it represents cultural partnership on the offensive.

Twenty-seven-year-old Susan Risser may have felt slightly nauseous when she left the cinema in Toronto back in September, but she was in no doubt that her encounter with the bizarre and violent Danish film *Valhalla Rising* was worth every cent. What the young film enthusiast didn't know was that she had just been part of *High Five Toronto*, the Nordic culture ministers' charm offensive in Canada.

The Canadian metropolis, accustomed as it is to major film events, formed the ideal setting for the big push: the Nordic Film & TV Fund's international launch of the new distribution-funding scheme for Nordic film, which provides international distributors with access to a total pool of no less than NOK 1.5 million.

"The High Five concept was launched as a completely practical initiative with twin objectives: to boost sales of Nordic films abroad, which will raise revenue for rights holders, and to ensure wider distribution for Nordic film, not least for the benefit of a global audience," explains Hanne Palmquist, CEO of the Nordic Film & TV Fund.

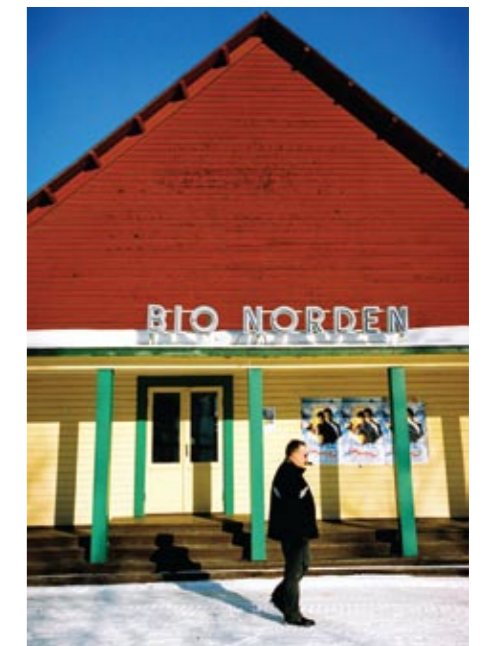
The scheme is financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers' globalisation pool, and represents one of the tangible outcomes of the prime ministers' express desire to raise the international profile of the Region and its culture. That is why Nicolas Winding Refn's modern Viking drama had its world

premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival 2009. Although Canadian film buffs are used to the Festival having a highly diverse programme, it was nonetheless unusual to encounter a movie from a region whose films are not exactly renowned for filling cinemas in Toronto – or anywhere else in North America for that matter.

However, the evidence suggests that *High Five* has had the desired effect, so Ms. Risser's positive experience is unlikely be a one-off.

"Feedback indicates that the funding concept and the choice of Toronto as a launch pad made a significant international impact," says an enthusiastic Hanne Palmquist. "The Nordic Film & TV Fund is therefore already working on the next step now that it has received a three-year grant from the Council of Ministers' Globalisation Pool."

Palmquist, an experienced director, is far from alone in her positive evaluation. Feedback from the international film





Katrín Jakobsdóttir

industry reveals a strong desire for the initiative to continue.

“We’re thrilled to be part of High Five Toronto,” says Ryan Werner of IFC Films in the USA. “At a time when foreign films are struggling in the marketplace, this is an incredibly smart and forward-thinking initiative that we hope other territories will also take notice of.”

Richard Lorber, President of Kino Lorber, Inc. in the USA, agrees:

“High Five has given an adrenaline shot to the indie art-house sector in the US, and provided a boost for Nordic films. This funding makes us look more closely at the output from Scandinavia. In fact, High Five is not just adrenaline but vitamins, too. It creates a healthier environment for the future of international film in the US – especially Nordic cinema.”

Palmquist stresses that High Five has already produced tangible results.

“We’ve already provided grants to a number of eminently qualified international applicants. The feedback from a wide range of international (and Nordic) players in the industry has convinced me that we have a very successful initiative here – in both cultural and commercial terms.”

“The sales companies calculate that High Five has boosted sales by around 30%,” she added, commenting on the importance of High Five to international distribution. “A distributor will never take on a film solely because of 10–20% funding for the total launch budget. But it can tip the scales and encourage a distributor to take a risk and buy a movie that he or she thinks might have a chance in an otherwise fiercely competitive market.”

Palmquist’s analysis is backed up by an Asian distributor. “There are so many good Nordic films, but the people in Taiwan are not too familiar with them,

so it’s always tough to market the films despite their great quality,” explains distributor Wayne Chang of Catchplay in Taiwan. “From a financial perspective, it’s sometimes a dilemma for distributors like us to acquire these movies, as it’s hard to recoup the cost from the market. The grant will definitely help, as it will enable us to educate the market about Nordic films. It will also mean that we have many more opportunities to give these films a mainstream theatrical release. And, of course, theatrical-level promotion will benefit DVD, TV and VOD, and increase the total sales of the movie.”

The launch of High Five Toronto was a milestone in the culture ministers’ overall globalisation strategy. Katrín Jakobsdóttir, the Icelandic Minister of Culture who doubles as Minister for Nordic Co-operation and chaired the Nordic Council of Ministers at the time, was proud of the presentation given on 11 September during the International Film Festival.

“High Five Toronto is part of an overall strategy. The culture ministers see partnerships as a particularly important – perhaps the most important – common denominator within the overall framework of official Nordic co-operation,” the minister explains. “Nordic art and culture help to shape and promote our values of creativity and quality in a global context.”

For Susan Risser, the encounter with Refn’s new Viking action film was also an encounter with a brand-new way of presenting part of Nordic history.



FACTS

High Five is the name given by the Nordic Film & TV Fund to its distribution and promotion initiatives.

High Five Toronto

High Five Toronto 2009 was a global film-distribution funding initiative. The pan-Nordic campaign was initiated by the Council of Ministers and the Nordic Film & TV Fund.

The aim was to facilitate the cinematic release of films outside the Region. The High Five initiative is funded by the Council of Ministers’ globalisation pool and the Nordic Film & TV Fund.

Nordic High Five

The Nordic High Five funding scheme provides additional support for the distribution of Nordic films within the Region. The initiative is designed, among other things, to help ensure that cinema audiences have greater opportunities to see Nordic films, and that the films have access to a larger potential market. Nordic High Five has a three-year mandate.

In 2009, a total of approx. NOK 2.5 million was allocated in grants. For further information, please refer to www.norden.org and www.nordiskfilmogtvfond.com.

Gender equality & climate change



Árni Páll Árnason

Climate change is hitting the women of the South and the men of the North hard. The death toll in the wake of the Asian tsunami of 2004 consisted of 70–80% women, while melting ice in the Arctic is endangering the traditional livelihood of male hunters. Women and men have different CO₂ footprints, they are affected by the climate in different ways and their impact on the climate varies. With this in mind the Nordic Region made it a top priority to put the gender perspective on the international climate agenda in 2009.

The goal was to have the gender perspective incorporated into the new UN climate treaty. Although many were disappointed by the agreement reached by world leaders at COP15 in December 2009, partly because it is not legally binding, the fact that the treaty makes several references to gender does represent a Nordic victory.

“We succeeded in getting references to the gender perspective included in the agreement,” says Árni Páll Árnason, the minister responsible for gender equality in Iceland, which held the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2009. “Of course, we would have preferred the agreement to be legally binding but I’m delighted that we’ve taken this step in the right direction. The Nordic Region’s work up until this point has laid a solid foundation that we can build upon during the next round of negotiations, hopefully achieving even more tangible outcomes.”

Different impact

Climate and gender issues are inter-related for several reasons. Women

and men affect the climate in different ways. For example, in the industrialised world, men drive more than women so their CO₂ emissions are greater. Men are estimated to account for 75% of all driving in Sweden. Women, on the other hand, often travel by more environmentally friendly modes of transport.

Another reason is that climate change affects men and women differently. For example, many more women than men die in climate-related natural disasters such as flooding because they are less likely to be able to swim or climb a tree.

“A study by the London School of Economics concludes that gender differences in death rates connected to natural disasters are directly linked to women’s economic and social rights,” Rebecca Pearl of the network GenderCC – Women for Climate Justice told a Nordic panel at the UN Women’s Commission Session in March 2009.

Climate change also has an impact on men, e.g. losing their jobs in the wake of climate-related natural disasters. The





consequences of climate change are among their most obvious in the Arctic Region, where traditional hunter-gatherer communities have been profoundly affected by melting sea ice. The hunting season has become shorter and the hunting grounds have shrunk, making a traditional lifestyle more difficult – or impossible.

“Once the top of the social pyramid, hunters are now at the bottom because their skills are less useful,” Malin Jennings, founder of Arctic Indigenous Climate Change Ethnographies (ICCE), explained during the debate on climate change and gender equality in the Nordic Council of Ministers’ offices in Copenhagen in December 2009. “They are no longer capable of serving as the sole breadwinner for their families, and this creates social problems.”

Skewed decision making

The fact that the genders are affected by and influence the climate in different ways makes it imperative to promote gender balance in negotiations and decision-making processes. Currently, women account for only 15–20% of delegation leaders in UN climate negotiations.

“If decisions were made by both women and men, and were based on the respective realities of their lives, needs and experiences, then the likelihood of the solutions reached protecting the interests of wider sections of society would increase. In particular, it would mean more environmentally friendly behaviour – and what benefits the health of the planet benefits us all,” the Nordic gender ministers concluded in a joint opinion piece in the Danish newspaper *Information* in March 2009.

Incorporation of a gender perspective into the new agreement represents a step in the right direction, towards a more gender-balanced climate policy. Whether future climate negotiations will result in a legally binding agreement remains to be seen, but the Nordic focus on the gender perspective will continue unabated.

Facts

- Women and men have very different carbon footprints.
- Women and men are affected differently by climate change.
- Women are rarely involved in decision-making processes, e.g. climate-change negotiations.
- Men use cars more often than women. Women use public transport more often than men.
- 70–80% of the casualties after the 2004 Asian tsunami were women.
- 62% of women are willing to pay extra for climate-friendly products, compared to 54% of men.
- 81% of women support climate labelling on food and staple goods, compared to just 67% of men.



Combating unemployment



Siv Friðleifsdóttir

The global financial crisis has triggered a surge in Nordic unemployment, especially among young people, and the political focus has turned to establishing an inclusive and sustainable job market. The annual Session of the inter-parliamentary Nordic Council in autumn 2009 sent a clear message to ministers about how to achieve this goal.

“It is absolutely essential that we identify tangible short- and long-term solutions. Otherwise, we run the risk of whole generations being ‘lost’, living a life of exclusion, poverty, crime and substance abuse, with greater susceptibility to health problems and lower quality of life than others of the same age group. Multilateral Nordic partnerships can provide solutions,” says Siv Friðleifsdóttir MP (Iceland) who chairs the Nordic Council Welfare Committee.

The crisis has hit demand, production and employment in many markets. The Nordic countries have all felt the impact to varying degrees. In attempts to safeguard the Nordic welfare model, the governments have suggested various short- and long-term initiatives, based on national circumstances, to keep unemployment as low as possible, address the problem of long-term unemployment and source the capital needed for businesses and entrepreneurs.

“Creating an inclusive and sustainable Nordic labour market is a top priority for all of our countries,” says Friðleifsdóttir, “and our governments prioritise the principle of ‘work for all’. All the sectors are focused on securing and creating new and sustainable jobs for the benefit of society as well as the individual.”

Nevertheless, growth in youth unemployment is alarming – a whole generation aged 16–25 may be at risk of permanent exclusion from the labour market. Particularly vulnerable are young people with disabilities, immigrants and other sub-groups who already faced obstacles to entry into the workplace. This concerns the members of the Welfare Committee.

Indicators

To reverse this trend, the Nordic Council has called on ministers to develop indicators for sustainable employment, much like the ones that already exist for environmental sustainability. They will be used to monitor progress and inform the work of those involved in formulating and following up on national policies for sustainable development.



The Nordic Council Welfare Committee hopes that the Council of Ministers will now initiate the process of developing indicators for sustainable employment, so that future employment policy leads to greater inclusion and a more sustainable society.

The World Commission on Environment and Development defines sustainable development as: “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987). It is based on three pillars: the economic, social and environmental, all of which need to be in place at global level.

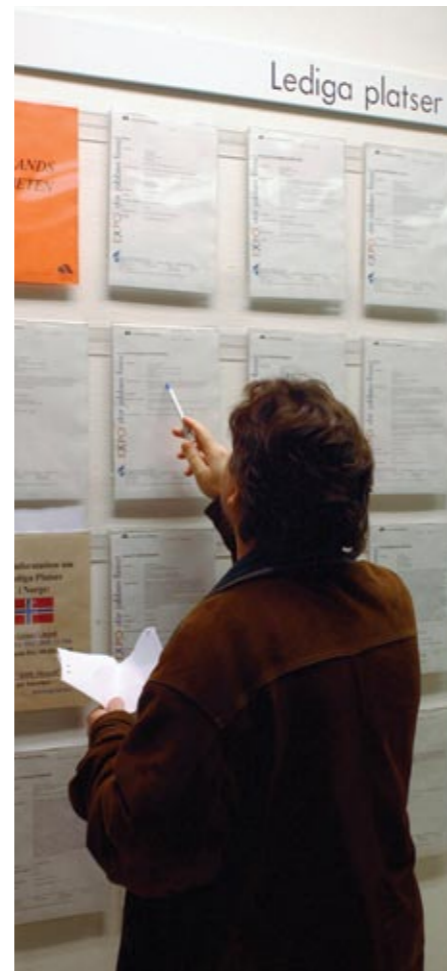
“The Nordic countries need to ask themselves: Are we, as countries and as a Region, helping to steer global development in a more sustainable direction? Do fundamental threats to long-term welfare exist in the Region? In order to answer these questions, the Nordic Council believes that common goals need to be set for sustainable development and that potential threats to the Nordic welfare model need to be identified,” says Friðleifsdóttir, who represents the centrist Progressive Party in the Icelandic parliament.

In her opinion, the primary focus of an inclusive and sustainable labour market should be on flexibility – i.e. individuals should be able to remain in employment throughout the different phases of their lives, even as their needs change. Secondly, employment must be organised so that it does not make people sick, and workplaces must be inclusive so that the ill and people with disabilities are able to remain in work and make whatever contribution they can.

She also emphasises the importance of promoting freedom of movement in the Region, especially in the social services and tax spheres, and of removing current obstacles to the mobility of students and job seekers.

“The Region has enormous potential to be a global frontrunner when it comes to developing innovative solutions based on human needs,” she concludes.

The Nordic Council Welfare Committee hopes that the Council of Ministers will now initiate the process of developing indicators for sustainable employment, so that future employment policy leads to greater inclusion and a more sustainable society.



Facts

Unemployment in the Nordic Region (as % of the workforce):

- **Denmark: 4.4** (November 2009)
Young people (15–29): 10.4 (Q3 2009, Statistics Denmark)
- **Finland: 8.5** (November 2009)
Young people (15–24): 21.1 (November 2009, Statistics Finland)
- **Norway: 3.2** (November 2009, Statistics Norway)
Young people (16–24): 8.9 (November)
- **Iceland: 8.0** (November 2009)
Young people (16–24): 16.1 (Q4 2009, Statistics Iceland)
- **Sweden: 8.0** (November 2009)
Young people (15–24): 22.9 (November 2009, Statistics Sweden)

Further information about working life in the Nordic Region is available at www.nordiclbourjournal.org.



Unwavering optimism turns creativity into business acumen

Every day, they've had to prove it's a real job, that they're proper businesswomen. But you won't hear any complaints from glass artists and unwavering optimists Anne-Liis Leht and Kristi Ringkjob. Their company, Annkris-Glass, is now two-and-a-half years old, performing well financially, and aiming even higher.

Getting started was tough. After graduating from the Estonian Academy of Arts, Leht and Ringkjob had to make a decision. Would they follow the path taken by so many others and resign themselves to lives as accomplished amateurs? Or complement their artistic talent with business skills, a path rarely preferred by creative types?

They chose the latter, rockier road. Year one was frustrating. Leht jokingly asks Ringkjob if she remembers the time they went shopping for food and had to put the essentials back when they reached the checkout only to find they had no money. In the early days, the new company directors ploughed all their income back into expensive equipment and materials. Annkris-Glass has high standards, using only top-quality raw materials (mostly from Germany) to create unique works of art.

Since the company moved into the Tallinn Creative Incubator last autumn, the two artists have been completely immersed in the world of commerce – they are now fully-fledged creative entrepreneurs. The Incubator provides a studio-like business environment for companies capable of generating welfare and jobs by creating and using intellectual property. It has room for 23 companies, including 45–50 workplaces.

Similar institutions may well exist elsewhere in the world, including in the Nordic Region, but the Tallinn centre is unique. Most incubators place the emphasis firmly on creativity, but this one is commercially oriented, providing creative tenants like Leht and Ringkjob with the opportunity to learn more about various aspects of business such as export, sales and marketing.

Eva Leemet, who now works as project manager for the Estonian creative-economy portal Loov Eesti (Creative Estonia), advising businesses from her base at a new incubator in Tartu, also helped set up the incubator in Tallinn.

“The chance to swap knowledge and discuss experiences is priceless,” she says, as the topic turns to an international conference held in the city in March 2009, which led to the emergence of new political and project-related networks, based on the principle that the creative industries require synergies if they are to operate effectively at a global level.

The conference was organised by the Nordic Council of Ministers' office in Estonia, in collaboration with, among others, the Estonian Ministry of Culture and KreaNord – an initiative that aims to meet the demand for a joint development and policy programme for the creative economies of the Nordic countries.

From survey to incubator

“Support from the Nordic Council of Ministers allowed us to work on the strategic level for a year and a half,” says Raul Oreškin, a board member at the Creative Economy Centre in Tartu.



04



Surveys have shown that most artists in Tartu are engaged in project work, which means that they have no job security in their specialist areas. They often lack even the most basic knowledge about how to set up and run a company. Most of their work is sold via unofficial channels, depriving the state of tax income and the artists of social benefits such as health insurance, pensions, etc. The centre, which incorporates an incubator, opened last spring to address these issues.

The people actively engaged in developing the Baltic creative industries stress the importance of exchanging experiences and maintaining contacts with their Nordic counterparts. The Nordic Council of Ministers funded study trips by Estonian officials and experts to Iceland and the Faroe Islands in 2009, for example. The Riga Meetings Film Industry Forum in October was also subsidised by the Nordic-Baltic Mobility Programme for Business and Industry. It brought together 30 film professionals from Nordic and Baltic countries to network, discuss projects, share best practices, explain problems and propose new partnership models.

What next?

Ragnar Siil, Head of the Development Department of the Estonian Ministry of Culture, envisages many opportunities for partnerships with Nordic countries, both in Baltic forums and in the EU: “Both Estonia and the Nordic countries are very small fish in the global pond, so our competitiveness depends on partnerships.”

A grant from the Nordic-Baltic Mobility Programme for Business and Industry will allow specialists from the Tartu Creative Economy Centre to study the work done by their colleagues in Finland and Norway and to organise a seminar for partners from Turku, Tampere, Bergen, Uppsala, Riga and Klaipeda. It is envisaged that the seminar will result in the emergence of a network of creative companies from the Nordic and Baltic countries.

Annkris-Glass also has plans for the future – Leht and Ringkjøb are already hard at work on their plans for 2011, which include refining their creative operations and conquering the Nordic market.



FACTS

Estonia defines the creative industries as: architecture, audio-visual products, design, performance arts, information technology, publishing, cultural heritage, art, music and advertising. The creative industries are eligible for funding from the joint Nordic-Baltic Mobility Programmes for Business and Industries [www.norden.lv]; for Public Administration [www.norden.ee]; and Culture [www.kknord.org].

KreaNord is a multi-sectoral initiative designed to serve as a focal point for the experiences, knowledge and visions of the business and cultural sides of the creative economy in the Nordic Region [www.kreanord.org].

Nordic flavour to global climate process



Andreas Carlgren

The major UN climate conference COP15, held in Copenhagen in December 2009, has been described as the most important international meeting in history. With Denmark hosting the conference and Sweden holding the Presidency of the EU, the Nordic countries played a central role. They also worked together, e.g. via the Nordic COP15 Group, to help steer the process in the right direction.

However, the final document, agreed after intensive negotiations in the Bella Center, was a disappointment to many hoping for a more ambitious and legally binding agreement. The Council of Ministers established a Nordic expert group to work towards a successful outcome in Copenhagen. The COP15 Group, as it was known, produced analyses and organised meetings between international negotiators to improve understanding between the various parties.

“The meetings organised by the COP15 Group were useful and timely, and increased understanding of climate processes among the participants,” says Jane Ellis, an OECD climate analyst who attended one of the seminars in Bangkok.

On the whole, the chair of the COP15 Group, Olle Björk of the Swedish Ministry of the Environment, was satisfied with its activities. “In general, we succeeded in making a positive contribution to the negotiations, even if the agreement is not as good as the Nordic countries and the EU would have liked,” says Birch. “This was partly because neither the US nor China could or would go far enough, and partly due to the overwhelming complexity of the issue.”

The Swedish Minister of the Environment, Andreas Carlgren, stresses that urgent action is still needed as the process continues.

“Negotiations need to restart as a matter of urgency, and we need to implement measures that make attaining the two-degrees target feasible. This involves two main tracks. The first is to kickstart processes that will lead to a legally binding agreement at COP16 in Mexico. The second is to stimulate and accelerate the process of adaptation to a ‘low-carbon economy’ that is taking place around the world,” says Carlgren, who stresses that the Nordic countries are well placed to drive this process forward.



05



Ann-Kristine Johansson MP (Sweden), chair of the Nordic Council Environment and Natural Resources Committee, was disappointed with the results of COP15. “But we can’t let that paralyse us,” she says. “New steps have to be taken, new efforts made towards COP 16. The world urgently needs a global Marshall Plan, which will probably require an investment of several hundred billion dollars a year.”

Climate projects in developing countries

One of the main bones of contention at COP15 was the industrialised nations’ funding of climate measures in poorer countries. The Copenhagen agreement may stipulate certain sums of money and timescales, but many consider them inadequate.

However, the Nordic countries set a good example for COP15, demonstrating that it is possible for a group of countries to band together and agree on joint climate investments in low-income countries by amending the statutes of the Nordic Development Fund (NDF) so it is able to make direct investments into green projects.

By the end of 2009, the NDF had provided grants of almost €18 million to climate projects in Africa and Asia. The funding is being spent on solar panels and water pumps in Uganda, energy projects in Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, creating a market for solar water heaters in Rwanda, etc. “We were delighted to commence investment in climate-change initiatives in the world’s poorest countries,” says Helge Semb, Managing Director of NDF. In spring 2009, the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation took the decision to revamp the NDF, despite the fact that the Ministers for Overseas Aid had recommended disbanding it just a few years earlier. Under pressure from the environment ministers and the Nordic Council, the co-operation ministers decided to keep the NDF very much alive.

Jan-Erik Enestam, Director of the Nordic Council, considers NDF’s new mandate to be a hard-won victory for Nordic inter-parliamentary co-operation. “Without pressure from the Nordic Council, the outcome would surely not have been the same,” he says.

Nordic Climate Day

In the run-up to COP15, the Nordic Council of Ministers held Nordic Climate Day for schools throughout the Region to promote partnership between teachers in the various countries and, in particular, to enhance pupils’ awareness of climate issues.

Nordic Climate Day was held on 11 November. The ministers launched a major SMS-based climate competition, which required pupils to find creative ways to illustrate local problems using text, sound and pictures. They also took part in a climate-related general knowledge quiz via SMS. Almost 4,000 pupils in 150 schools throughout the Region participated in the event and some 500 proposals for climate teaching and input to the climate debate from the Nordic and Baltic countries have now been published on www.klimanorden.org.

“The young are the stakeholders and decision-makers of the future. We must get them involved in the climate debate,” says Finnish Minister of Education Henna Virkkunen.

The Council of Ministers worked closely with national bodies to devise and run Climate Day and an evaluation revealed that it was very highly regarded. “The competition format proved really good for the pupils and the Nordic dimension was at the forefront,” says Lea Houtsonen of the Finnish National Board of Education. “The schools also received positive support from researchers at the universities, the World Wildlife Fund, etc. All in all, we would like to say a big ‘thank you’ to the Council of Ministers for organising Climate Day.”

Nordic Climate Day is envisaged as an annual event.



Facts about the COP15 Group

- The Nordic COP15 Group began its work in 2008.
- It consists of climate experts from all five Nordic countries and the autonomous territories.
- The group, appointed by the Nordic Ministers of the Environment, has had its mandate extended until winter/spring 2011.
- In the run-up to COP15 in Copenhagen, the group commissioned 10 studies and arranged 31 meetings and seminars.

Facts about NDF

- The Nordic countries’ development funding institution
- NDF has been offering soft loans to developing countries since 1989.
- Since 2009, NDF has also offered donations towards climate projects.
- Projects normally receive between €500,000 and €4,000,000.
- NDF can grant funds to 27 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- Projects in Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Uganda, Rwanda, Benin, etc. have already received grants.
- By the end of 2009, NDF had already allocated a total of almost €18 million to climate projects.
- NDF has also allocated funds to the Nordic Climate Facility, a funding programme for small projects, administered by NDF and the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO).



New horizons for modern Nordic partnerships

9 February 2009 was a red-letter day in the history of Nordic co-operation. The Stoltenberg Report on future Nordic foreign and security policy co-operation was submitted to the Nordic foreign ministers, sparking off a lively debate on the future of Nordic partnerships.

For the most part, Thorvald Stoltenberg's 13 tangible proposals for working together in the Region were welcomed enthusiastically by Nordic MPs and governments.

The proposals refer first and foremost to a partnership between the governments on Nordic issues. However, as Stoltenberg himself points out in *One for all, all for one – New Nordic defence policy?*, "If foreign and security policy become part of the vocabulary of Nordic co-operation, our partnership will become more relevant in relation to the world outside the Region. The new form of partnership will not only strengthen the Region itself, it will reinforce the Nordic contribution at international level."

"Nordic partnership on foreign and security policy is more tangible and has wider perspectives than ever before," the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Jonas Gahr Støre, told the annual Session of the Nordic Council in October 2009. He was referring, among other things, to the fact that the Stoltenberg Report has elevated the Nordic debate to a new level.

All of the Nordic countries were in agreement that it would make sense to incorporate the 13 proposals. The process has already been initiated, e.g. by jointly procuring safety equipment for use in Kabul.



What do members of the Nordic Council make of the report?



Johan Linander MP, Center Party (SWE) and member of the Presidium of the Nordic Council

I see the Stoltenberg Report as an important step towards the renewal of Nordic co-operation. Foreign and security policy has for too long remained outside the remit of our partnership. It is time that elected representatives in the Region understand the need to work together on these issues in order to strengthen our Nordic voice in the world. We are five small countries, not strong global players on our own – but when we co-ordinate our efforts the Region actually is a force with which to be reckoned.

In principle, I would like to see all of the proposals in the Stoltenberg Report implemented. Some could be implemented relatively soon, while others are much longer-term projects. The important thing is that the Nordic prime ministers and foreign ministers push for their implementation and don't just let the report gather dust on a shelf.



Sigríður Ingibjörg Ingadóttir MP, Social Democratic Alliance (ICE), member of the Nordic Council Welfare Committee

Our strength in the world at large is that, as small countries, we are able to act as mediators in international negotiations and on thorny political issues. This reputation is based on the Nordic countries' strong democratic processes and their emphasis on human rights. We need to protect this image. The Stoltenberg Report represents a highly ambitious vision of the future. I think the type of partnership it advocates is important in the sense that it will help us protect our environmental, economic and security interests in the Baltic Sea and in northern and Arctic waters. At the same time, we also need to strengthen our role as peace-promoting democracies that stand for human rights. Research and innovative design will also continue to be our most important resources.



Per-Kristian Foss MP, Conservative (NO), member of the Presidium of the Nordic Council

Basically, I favour implementing the proposals and making debates on foreign policy more binding on the Nordic Council. Some of the points in the report are already being worked on. Others are more long term, and following them up will require stronger political will. The Nordic countries' defence chiefs already do a great deal when it comes to identifying possible co-ordination benefits.

On the part of the Nordic Council, it is important that we act as a driving force and advocate proposals for better and more co-ordinated environmental and security monitoring of the North Atlantic and Arctic. I also think we should follow up on the idea of more Nordic embassies.



Christina Gestrin MP, Swedish People's Party (FIN), member of the Presidium of the Nordic Council

Security issues are multi-faceted. I liked the fact that the Stoltenberg Report addressed aspects other than just military and defence partnership. Stoltenberg said that the world's attention is increasingly directed towards the Arctic Region, and that it is natural that the Nordic Region works together in that area. An important question is how we work more closely together on environmental issues, in order to prepare for and preferably prevent potential environmental disasters.

It is also important that the Nordic countries are actively involved in countering threats such as cross-border smuggling of weapons, drugs and, last but not least, people. Trafficking and other infringements of human rights constitute serious security threats that require close attention and can only be combated on a multinational level.



Niels Sindal MP, Social Democrat (DK), member of the Presidium of the Nordic Council

I would like to focus on three of the report's main proposals: closer co-operation on defence, the Arctic and diplomatic representation.

It is my firm belief that we will work more closely together in the future, including in areas into which politicians have previously been reluctant to be drawn. The unique geopolitical situation in the North Atlantic, the nature of Baltic co-operation and the number of global hotspots make Nordic partnership on foreign and security policy even more natural, both politically and practically. It will be interesting to see what the future holds, and what the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic Council consider to be significant in the development of our partnerships.

Thorvald Stoltenberg's 13 suggestions:

- 1) Deployment unit for military and civil stabilisation
- 2) Nordic co-operation on air surveillance over Iceland
- 3) A Nordic marine area surveillance system
- 4) A maritime deployment unit
- 5) A satellite system for monitoring and communication
- 6) Nordic co-operation on Arctic issues
- 7) A competence network against digital attacks
- 8) A disaster unit
- 9) An investigative unit for war crimes
- 10) Co-operation between foreign services (embassies, diplomats, etc.)
- 11) Military co-operation on transportation, medical, training, materials, and exercises
- 12) An amphibious unit
- 13) A Nordic solidarity statement

Safeguarding the North Atlantic environment



Svandís Svavarsdóttir

A large oil spill would be catastrophic for the biological diversity and sensitive marine areas of the North Atlantic Ocean, so Iceland has taken the initiative to invite its Nordic neighbours to help draw up a risk map of the vast, pristine areas that fall within the jurisdiction of Iceland, Greenland, Norway and the Faroe Islands.

Melting Arctic ice means that new shipping routes are opening up in the North Atlantic. Ships are able to ply routes that were impossible only a few years ago. Traffic is increasing in these areas, which increases the likelihood of hazardous incidents and disastrous oil spills, and therefore the need for surveillance and improved emergency response capability.

Preparing for possible catastrophes

“As the world is changing we have to be prepared for the risks that we may be seeing in connection with the consequences of climate change. And the risk map is one very important part of that preparedness,” says Svandís Svavarsdóttir, Minister for the Environment in Iceland, about the project financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Situated in the middle of the North Atlantic, Iceland relies heavily on the fishing industry. Its government invited

Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Norway to help collate information on the sensitive marine areas that stretch from the southern part of Greenland to the North Pole, and from the east coast of Greenland to the west of Norway. The final product will identify potential environmental catastrophes in the ocean in order to prepare the requisite contingency responses.

“Firstly, it will cover nature, sensitive and important areas, wildlife, biology and so on,” says Svavarsdóttir.

“Secondly, it will cover risk factors like possible pollutants, marine traffic, offshore activities, shipwrecks and drainage. And finally, it will identify possible responses. Who can respond and how?”

A Nordic responsibility

Svavarsdóttir emphasises the fact that the North Atlantic Ocean is a part of the Nordic Region, and that nobody is better equipped than the Nordic countries to understand the Arctic and respond to emergencies in this area. For this reason, the risk map is included in the Nordic Council of Ministers’ environmental programme.

The risk map will be ready towards the end of 2010, and will be made available on the Internet. It is primarily



“The risk map will assist us in responding to potential threats, making it possible to minimise or hopefully eliminate damage to the most sensitive areas,” says Ásgrímur L. Ásgrímsson

aimed at politicians, the Coast Guard and those taking responsibility for emergency responses, but it will also be available to the general public. Bird- and whale-watchers may find it particularly interesting.

Once it became evident that improvements were needed regarding the monitoring, retention and cleaning of pollution, the Icelandic Coast Guard (ICG) strived to make new tools available. A new, multi-purpose vessel will be delivered this year, equipped with pollution detection, detention and clean-up gear, as well as storage tanks for polluted seawater.

The risk map will be a very useful tool for the ICG.

“The risk map will assist us in responding to potential threats, making it possible to minimise or hopefully eliminate damage to the most sensitive areas,” says Ásgrímur L. Ásgrímsson, Commanding Officer at ICG. “It will also assist in the planning and organising of missions and help us to get the most use out of our equipment (e.g. aircraft and vessels). This will make these assets more cost-effective than if there was no risk map or comparable document available.”

Hopefully the Icelandic Coast Guard will never have to use its new equipment to detain pollution and oil spills, but the risk map means that the Nordic Region will be better prepared to protect the valuable North Atlantic Ocean.



Facts about the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic Council



The Nordic Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers (NCM) is the forum for formal co-operation between the Nordic governments. However, informal consultation and exchanges of information also play a key role in Nordic activities.

The purpose of the NCM is to promote Nordic co-operation, the collective Nordic identity and Nordic interests in the world at large. Decisions are reached by consensus.

A separate Council of Ministers co-ordinates work on each topic upon which the countries have agreed to collaborate. The Prime Ministers have the ultimate responsibility for the NCM but in practice the responsibility is delegated to the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation and their representatives, the Nordic Committee for Co-operation. They are aided in all their work by Committees of Senior Officials and by the Council of Ministers' Secretariat.

The NCM currently consists of the following Councils of Ministers:

- Finance
- Health and Social Affairs
- Trade, Energy and Regional Policies
- Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry
- The Environment
- Gender Equality
- Culture
- Legislative Affairs
- Education and Research
- Labour and the Working Environment
- The Nordic Committee for Co-operation

The Nordic Council

The Nordic Council (NC) is a political forum for co-operation between Nordic parliamentarians and their governments. The NC holds a plenary Session once a year, at which parliamentarians meet with Nordic ministers. The rest of the year, the work of the Council is done by five permanent committees and the Presidium.

The NC takes initiatives on and discusses political issues. It suggests the direction in which Nordic co-operation should progress, and monitors whether the governments comply with its decisions. The NC works in many policy fields, e.g. the environment, social and health policy, culture, education and training, children and young people, business, gender equality, justice, international co-operation and welfare.

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