

THE NORDIC REGION

– stronger and greener together

THE NORWEGIAN
PROGRAMME FOR
THE PRESIDENCY
2022



Nordic Council
of Ministers



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This publication is also available online in a web-accessible version at
pub.norden.org/politiknord2021-743

FROM THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE MINISTER FOR NORDIC CO-OPERATION

The Nordic sense of community is unique. We share basic values and have great trust in each other. Decades of close integration and co-operation have shown that the Nordic countries are stronger together, including in times of crisis. In an international context, we are each other's closest friends and partners.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected us all, but the Region is now opening up again, and travel, work, business and personal encounters are helping to rebuild our strong ties. We will continue to learn from each other.

Our shared Nordic ambition is to be a world leader in change, competitiveness and sustainability. Together, we will lead from the front and contribute to the global implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Nordic co-operation is important not just for our region, but for Europe – and the world.

The need for transition is also pressing. The world is changing; the climate crisis has become acute. The choices we make now will affect our own and future generations. Vision 2030 is our joint plan for how the Nordic Region will take responsibility. The vision's goal of the Nordic Region as the most sustainable region in the world is an important tool for achieving the climate goals in the Paris Agreement and the European Green Deal. Together, Vision 2030 and the EU climate plan for 2030 set out a clear and distinct direction for our work.

The Norwegian Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers will focus on three priorities: **a green, competitive and socially sustainable Nordic Region.** We will intensify work on Vision 2030, help to speed up the green transition and ensure the effectiveness of the Council of Ministers. Together, we will build a stronger and greener Nordic Region.

We look forward to working with you in 2022!



The Prime Minister, Jonas Gahr Støre, and the Minister for Nordic Co-operation, Anne Beathe Kristiansen Tvinneim.

Photo: NTB
Kommunikasjon/
Statsministerens kontor.



A GREEN NORDIC REGION

The climate and environmental challenges we face are among the most pressing tasks of our era. Higher temperatures, more extreme weather events and the erosion of the ecosystem put the basis for human life at risk, threatening our future health, welfare, security and growth.

Sustainable development demands that we look at the big picture and find solutions together. The Norwegian Presidency will highlight the connection between climate and nature, reduce the loss of biodiversity and **shed light on how nature-based solutions contribute to the green transition.**

Another focus will be on the **pace of the green transition.** Governments, researchers, industry and civil society all have their parts to play. By working together, the Nordic countries are better placed to identify the most important drivers, processes and measures for accelerating the transition. It is essential that the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the transition to new, green technologies are implemented as quickly as possible. The Nordic Region must work together in international forums

Coastal areas and the sea provide the Nordic countries with trade routes, jobs, nutrition, food security, cultural identity and places to live. The seas play a crucial role in climate regulation but are highly vulnerable to the various effects of climate change and loss of biodiversity. The UN set up the High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy in 2018. The panel recently presented its recommendations, and every effort will be made to follow up on them during the Norwegian Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2022. The Presidency will step up Nordic co-operation on sustainable marine management. We will assess whether the lessons learned from the Baltic Sea should lead to closer co-operation on the environment and sustainability in the Skagerrak. We will also work on the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, as well as on promoting food from the sea



The Nordic countries are well placed to become greener.

and sustainable food systems, all of which follow up directly on the sustainable development goals and the Nordic vision.

Shipping is important in the Nordic Region and a natural area in which to work together on the green transition, work that will also make the Region more competitive at both EU and global levels. The Presidency will follow up on this work with a particular focus on **drawing up a roadmap to zero-emission fuel**. The introduction of sustainable, zero-emission fuel is crucial for meeting the emission targets set by the UN's International Maritime Organization (IMO). It also plays a key role in the EU's work to reduce emissions from shipping.

The Norwegian Presidency will build on the Nordic Region's ambitions for a **sustainable circular economy**. Here, new solutions, new technologies and new partnerships across borders, sectors and industries will be important. As one of the world's most highly-skilled, innovative, digitalised and integrated regions, the Nordic Region can help develop markets for circular products, materials and resources. We must work together to build a circular economy with non-toxic lifecycles that waste as few resources as possible.

The biological resources on land, along the coast and at sea, have constituted the basis for business activities in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture and, therefore, also for employment and the establishment of settlements across the Nordic Region. These resources are vital to supplies of healthy and nutritious food to the people of the Region, generate considerable export income and are central to the circular economy. They will also be essential components in the shift from a fossil economy to the bioeconomy. The **sustainable use of blue and green bioeconomies** will, therefore, be a priority for the Norwegian Presidency.

Another key part of the green transition is Nordic energy co-operation. The Nordic Region has the most integrated regional energy partnership in the world. The countries are international leaders in green energy solutions. The Norwegian Presidency will seek to ensure that the Nordic countries work together to **develop the closest possible energy co-operation** and to promote technological solutions as part of the EU's "Fit for 55" initiative.



A COMPETITIVE NORDIC REGION

The Nordic countries are well placed to become greener, more digital and more competitive, thanks in part to the unique Nordic labour market model. The joint labour market is one of the cornerstones of Nordic co-operation.

The pandemic has had a global economic impact. The business community has been under enormous pressure, and many jobs have disappeared. The best way to generate value and distribute wealth fairly is to make sure that as many people as possible are in gainful employment. However, significant efforts will be required to restore and further develop an inclusive economy.

The potential for long-term economic growth also depends on production and consumption becoming increasingly sustainable. The Norwegian Presidency will seek to re-establish **the strength of the Nordic business community and labour market** and make them resilient in the face of new crises.

Some of the key priorities that will help enhance Nordic competitiveness after the pandemic are listed below.

Vision 2030 makes it necessary to **work even more closely together on transport**. The Norwegian Presidency will seek to establish ongoing and tangible co-operation on transport.

Digital infrastructure (e-infrastructure) is a basic prerequisite for exploiting the potential of new technology. It is also an important tool for addressing scientific and social challenges related to the green transition.

The digitalisation of education, working life and services is in full swing. This will provide new opportunities for Nordic towns and villages, all of which need to attract skills and new businesses.

Lifelong learning and digital skills are relevant themes throughout the Region. The Nordic countries face the same challenges and have the same



The Nordic countries are well placed to become more digital and more competitive.

opportunities because of increasing digitalisation and the faster pace of change in the world of work. This is particularly relevant to the green transition, which will require new knowledge.

As a contribution to the green transition, the Norwegian Presidency will **highlight efforts in the area of developing and exchanging data and the use of digital services** across national borders in the Nordic Region. We will also continue the important joint work to **promote the spread of 5G, advances in ethical and responsible artificial intelligence, and work on data-sharing in the Nordic Region.**

Due to the pandemic, **sharing health data** has become a pressing issue. It is essential to be able to quickly share data on infectious diseases, treatment, monitoring and results. It is also highly important to be able to enhance ongoing clinical studies with unique health data from registries in order to save lives and improve health. The Norwegian Presidency will work to facilitate **data-driven research and innovation** aimed at strengthening the Nordic Region's position as a leading region for the development of health technology and new treatments.



A SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE NORDIC REGION

The Nordic welfare model is one of the Region's defining features. However, it currently faces numerous challenges. These have been exacerbated during the pandemic, not only in a public health context but across society as a whole – and for children and young people in particular. The pandemic's effects have been different, and this has put a strain on solidarity and justice.

Good welfare systems that guarantee economic and social security are important not only for individual citizens but also for adaptability in the world of work. The fact that women in the Nordic Region work almost as much as men is one of the reasons why the welfare states are so robust. High rates of employment make the welfare models more sustainable. To counteract the negative consequences of the pandemic and ensure long-term social sustainability, it is important that the labour market is inclusive and that measures are introduced to include vulnerable groups.

Exclusion from the job market has significant consequences both for the individual and for society. The Presidency will continue efforts to define the future of working life in the Nordic Region. We want to increase knowledge of measures that will help to **include more people in working life and in society in general, with a particular emphasis on vulnerable young people.**

Health preparedness is an important element in Nordic co-operation – and has only become more important as a result of the pandemic. On its own, the Nordic Region will not be able to address many of the challenges that the countries face in terms of preparedness for future health crises. However, Nordic co-operation has a wealth of experience to offer as input into the EU's ongoing initiatives to improve contingency planning. The Norwegian Presidency will continue Finland's work on emergency preparedness, including **co-operation on crisis management and security of supplies.**



The Nordic countries are well placed to become a more socially and sustainable region.

The rise in digital crime has led to new challenges in the areas of policing and prevention, but we must also safeguard the legal rights and privacy of the individual. The Norwegian Presidency will **work to combat digital crime while also ensuring the right to privacy.**

Just as equality and welfare are prerequisites for employment and economic growth, culture and language are the building blocks for our shared values and for the development of the Nordic identity. Culture and language bind us together, create unity and build bridges between Nordic governments, civil society and people. The Norwegian Presidency will **continue the vital Nordic co-operation in the areas of language and culture.**

In a world characterised by increasing pressure on the rule of law and democracy and by declining trust between citizens and decision makers, it is more important than ever to protect the Nordic values of sustainability, inclusion, democracy, openness, freedom of expression and equality. This need has become even clearer during the pandemic.

These Nordic values will form the foundation for the Nordic Region to become the world's most sustainable and integrated region by 2030.

Our vision 2030

A **competitive** Nordic region

Together, we will promote green growth in the Nordic region based on knowledge, innovation, mobility and digital integration.

A **green** Nordic region

Together, we will promote a green transition of our societies and work towards carbon neutrality and a sustainable circular and bio-based economy.



**The Nordic
region will
become the most
sustainable and
integrated region
in the world**

A **socially sustainable** Nordic region

Together, we will promote an inclusive, equal and interconnected region with shared values and strengthened cultural exchange and welfare.

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

The Nordic Region – stronger and greener together

The Norwegian Programme for the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers 2022

PolitikNord 2021:743

ISBN 978-92-893-7135-3 PDF

ISBN 978-92-893-7136-0 ONLINE

<http://dx.doi.org/10.6027/politiknord2021-743>

Published 3.11.2021

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Layout: Louise Jeppesen

Cover photo: Johnér

Other photos: **A GREEN NORDIC REGION:** Johnér, Einar Aslaksen/Pudder Agency, Unsplash.com

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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 the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

Nordic co-operation has firm traditions in politics, economics and culture and plays an important role in European and international forums. The Nordic community strives for a strong Nordic Region in a strong Europe.

Nordic co-operation promotes regional interests and values in a global world. The values shared by the Nordic countries help make the region one of the most innovative and competitive in the world.

The Nordic Council of Ministers

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