Nordic Council of Ministers

THE NORWEGIAN PROGRAMME FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE NORDIC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS 2027

Standing together in the face of uncertainty



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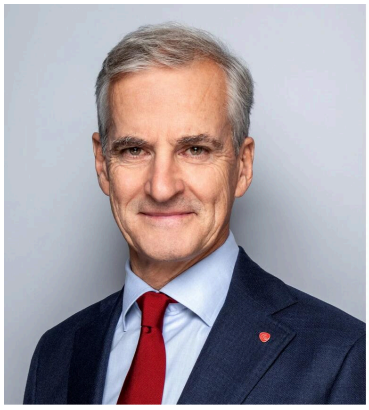
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From the Prime Minister and the Minister for Nordic Co-operation




Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre and the Minister for Nordic Co-operation Åsmund Grøver Aukrust

Photos NTB Kommunikasjon/Statsministerens kontor, Torgeir Haugaard / Forsvaret

Amid growing unrest on Europe's doorstep, escalating tensions between the superpowers and an increasingly unpredictable security landscape, the Nordic Region faces complex new challenges. The Russian war of aggression in Ukraine and fiercer strategic competition underscore the gravity of the situation and the need to safeguard our values and security. Nordic co-operation also has a new and clearer security-policy dimension now that all of the countries are members of NATO.

When we stand together, we are more secure and have greater scope for action and impact. Nordic co-operation is rooted in shared values, mutual trust and a binding commitment to work together throughout the Region. The pace of technological change and the pressure on democratic institutions, values and rights make working together both highly relevant and necessary. It means our countries are better placed to tackle the challenges we all face and to develop more effective and sustainable solutions than any of us could do alone.

Against this backdrop, the Norwegian Presidency will place particular emphasis on the interrelationships between democracy, security, sustainability and growth. We will enhance Nordic preparedness and resilience in the face of complex threats. Our work on the climate, the environment, security and strategic autonomy will be a priority that transcends every aspect of Nordic co-operation. We will also view Nordic initiatives in the context of the work of the EU and other international organisations to ensure they have the maximum possible overall impact.

Vision 2030 set out a clear path for our intergovernmental co-operation. The ambition to make the Nordic Region the most sustainable and integrated region in the world has made our work more coordinated, our priorities clearer and our

approach more results-oriented. We are now approaching a crossroads. In the run-up to 2030, the Norwegian Presidency will step up work on the vision and lay the foundations for the future of Nordic co-operation.

We look forward to working closely together with our Nordic neighbours, the Nordic Council of Ministers Secretariat and institutions, the Nordic Council and civil society. Standing together in the face of uncertainty will help Nordic co-operation to develop, address the challenges of today, and lay the foundations for a stronger and more united region.





Photos: Carlos Torres, Thomas Bjornstad, Daniel Schwarz

Intersectoral **priorities**

The Norwegian Presidency marks the start of the final phase of **Vision 2030.** The 14 sectoral programmes for Nordic co-operation 2025–2030 constitute the key framework for work in 2027 and serve as management tools to pursue the vision's three priorities: a green, competitive and socially sustainable Nordic Region. The Presidency will focus on making Nordic co-operation holistic and coherent.

One of the intersectoral themes for the Presidency will be **safeguarding democracy, the rule of law and basic rights.** High levels of participation in democratic processes, freedom of expression and strong trust in institutions are hallmarks of our Nordic societies and must be protected. However, we must acknowledge that these values are under pressure in our part of the world. Disinformation, growing polarisation, the influence of social media and the rapid pace of technological progress are significantly affecting public opinion and democratic processes. The Presidency will encourage broad, intersectoral co-operation to bolster democratic resilience.

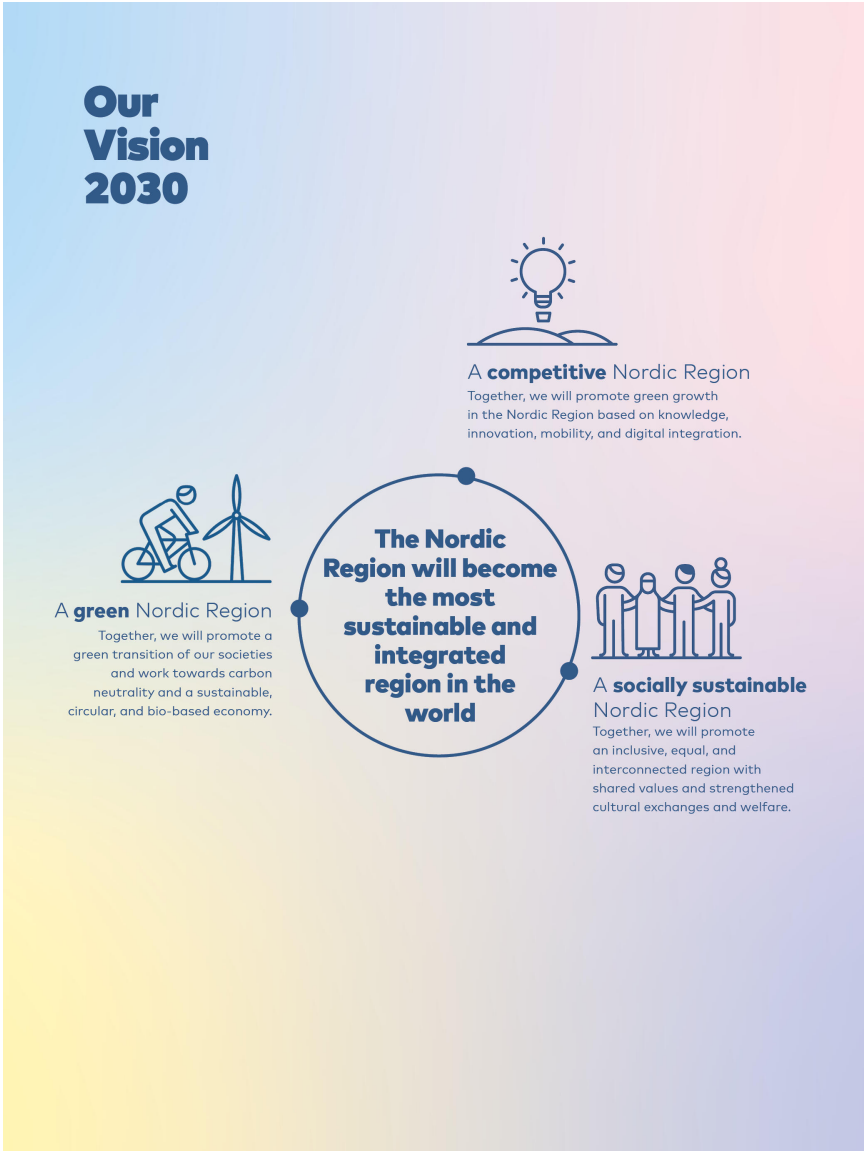
The Vision Conference, hosted by the Presidency and the Nordic Council of Ministers, will play an important role in this process in 2027. Themes such as democratic resilience, participation and trust in the digital age will feature on the agenda, and the event will also provide an opportunity to reflect on the future of co-operation in the run-up to 2030 and beyond.

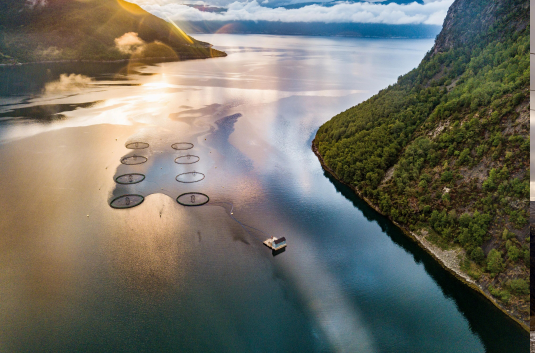
Another intersectoral theme will be enhancing **Nordic preparedness, security of supply and overall resilience.** Rising geopolitical tensions, climate change and digital vulnerabilities emphasise the need for closer collaboration on prevention, land-use planning, contingency planning and crisis management. The pandemic highlighted barriers to cross-border freedom of movement and exposed inadequacies in our cross-border coordination.

The Presidency will continue to develop Nordic solutions in the fields of energy, infrastructure, health, environmental preparedness, and access to critical expertise, as well as in the fight against organised and cross-border crime.

Digital preparedness and security will be integral to this work. Our dependence on complex global systems exposes us to new risks and vulnerabilities. Closer Nordic and Nordic-Baltic co-operation will be crucial to safeguarding our digital sovereignty, social trust, security and freedom in an increasingly digital world.

The Nordic Council of Ministers' international engagement, in cooperation with the EU, the UN system and other regional actors, makes a valuable contribution to Nordic cooperation. During the 2027 Presidency, the Arctic and the High North will be particularly relevant topics, Norway will lead the informal Nordic (N5) and Nordic-Baltic (NB8) co-operation on foreign and security policy, providing a valuable opportunity to coordinate and create both thematic and geographical synergies between the various forms of co-operation.







Photos: Holger J. Bub, Barnabas Davoti, Lachlan Gowen

A **green Nordic Region** – secure transition and sustainable resources management

Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution pose serious challenges to society, the economy and security in the Nordic Region. The Norwegian Presidency will lay the groundwork to ensure that our Region remains a **driving force behind an ambitious, knowledge-based climate and environment policy**, in line with Vision 2030, the Paris Agreement, the UN Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We will address the green transition in the context of social and economic sustainability, preparedness and long-term societal security.

The seas will feature prominently in our work. Nordic waters are under heavy pressure from climate change, fishing, pollution, biodiversity loss and invasive species. Denmark and Norway currently lead the Nordic Ocean Programme, which aims to generate knowledge about the climate, the marine environment and how to manage it. A range of current projects on the sustainable management, conservation and use of Nordic waters will present their results at a Nordic conference in 2027.

Norway wishes to use the Presidency to strengthen **interregional co-operation on the Nordic marine areas,** including in the Arctic, which is important to all of us. One of our initiatives will be a pilot project involving practical co-operation between regions, local authorities and research institutions to conserve the marine environment in the Skagerrak, the results of which will be applicable to other Nordic marine areas facing similar challenges.

Integrated co-operation to **curb biodiversity loss, adapt to climate change, implement nature-based solutions,** and manage complex climate and nature-related risks will make the region more resilient, particularly in vulnerable areas and communities. The keys to progress are lowering emissions to avoid climate tipping points and promoting prevention and restoration schemes that support adaptation to climate change. It is particularly important that we learn more about changes to the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) and the potential consequences for the climate, ecosystems and our societies in the Nordic Region. The Presidency will pay special attention to the Arctic and the

High North, which are particularly vulnerable to climate change and nature loss. This work will include an event about the Arctic and knowledge preparedness in uncertain times.

Nordic-level work to **combat plastic pollution** will continue, with initiatives that address the entire value chain, including microplastics. For example, a major Nordic project on alternatives to rubber granules, focused on children and young people, will conclude in 2027. Global negotiations on plastics will resume in March 2027. To support them, Norway will host a high-level Nordic ministerial meeting in Oslo in February.

Norway is spearheading a Nordic collaboration on **green shipping** to reduce emissions and develop zero-emission transport solutions. The opening of green shipping corridors in the Nordic Region and Northern Europe will be a key priority, with the first expected to be operational in 2027 – in other words, the first zero-emission vessels are due to be sailing in Nordic waters in 2027.

Nordic experience, solutions and knowledge of the ocean, climate and environment will help drive ambition in international processes. The Norwegian Presidency will build on its predecessors' work and their focus on rules-based multilateral co-operation as a prerequisite for resolving the global climate and environmental crises.

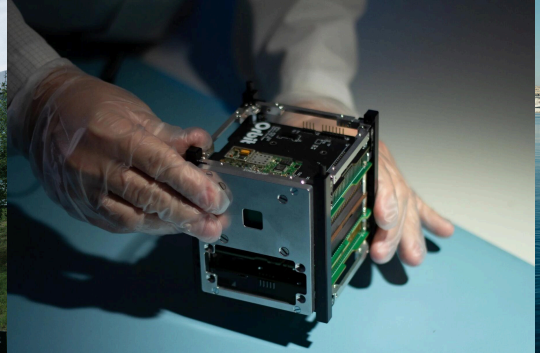
Throughout the Nordic Region, the **fisheries, aquaculture, agriculture, food and forestry** sectors are vital for sustaining communities, providing employment and generating growth. They also play crucial roles in food safety and security of supply. Following up on the Karlstad Declaration on Preparedness and Robustness (2024), the Presidency will improve co-operation on contingency planning for crises and on security of supply, including through the Partnership for Nordic Food Supply Security. We will prioritise solutions that combine sustainable resource management with profitable business development, recruitment, robust value chains and innovation. Our priority for the **bioeconomy** will be to develop initiatives that boost growth in agriculture, forestry and the maritime sector, with an emphasis on sustainable resource use.

Food security means everyone has access to plentiful, safe and healthy food that meets their nutritional needs and food preferences, enabling them to lead a healthy, active life. It is important for our health, quality of life and socially stable communities, and we must protect it, even in times of crisis. The Presidency will follow up on the Nordic Food Security Partnership's efforts to improve food security. This work will include organising a conference on public-private partnerships. We will also continue the work on sustainable aquatic and land-based food systems designed to make sure the produce is nutritious and safe.

The **Nordic electricity market** is closely integrated and currently works well. Nonetheless, the Presidency wishes to contribute to further development with regard to affordable and stable prices for consumers and businesses, security of supply and energy preparedness. The proposed new European Commission regulations may have an impact on the Nordic energy market. The Nordic

countries' shared interest in efficient markets, high levels of security of supply, and cost-effective, technology-neutral approaches makes the Nordic Council of Ministers a useful forum for discussing positions on the proposed legislation and its potential implementation at the national level.

Commercial CO_2 capture, transport and storage are important to meeting the Paris Agreement targets. The Norwegian Presidency will continue to develop close Nordic co-operation on **carbon capture and storage (CCS)**.


Photos: Patrik Bloudek, Ulrik Falk-Petersen, Eirik Skarstein

A **competitive** and **digitally prepared** Nordic Region

Developments in Europe and elsewhere are reshaping the frameworks for Nordic co-operation. European competitiveness, strategic autonomy and economic security are high on the agenda. The prerequisites for remaining competitive include growth, higher productivity and greater equality in the labour market, all of which will make it easier to adapt to ongoing changes in technology, economics and security.

The Norwegian Presidency will prioritise enhancing **Nordic competitiveness.** This work will be based on the report *Analysis of Competitiveness in a Nordic Perspective,* presented in autumn 2026 as part of the joint Danish-Faroese Presidency. We will follow up on the work in dialogue with public bodies, the business sector, research communities and social partners, and identify specific Nordic measures to boost productivity and growth. The Presidency will also monitor the progress of Nordic Compass – a business-led initiative to boost Nordic and European competitiveness through closer collaboration on capital markets, technology and other strategically important areas. The initiative will help identify areas where the Nordic Region holds a particularly strong global position in technology.

The Presidency will seek to improve Nordic competitiveness by coordinating intersectoral and cross-border efforts to make the Nordic **labour market and business more integrated.** This work will build on the business ministers' 2024 declaration, which called for closer co-operation and highlighted that a more integrated Nordic Region was vital to promoting the green transition, increasing exports and generating growth. A core part of this work will be to **reduce existing barriers to cross-border freedom of movement and to prevent new ones from arising.** This will be achieved in collaboration with the Freedom of Movement Council, the border committees and the business community. Better digital solutions, including international electronic identity (eID) and business ID, will be important tools. Combined with relevant EU legislation, these solutions will improve the functioning and integration of Nordic business and the labour market.

Digitalisation and new technology are key drivers of growth in the Nordic Region. The Presidency will continue to support and enhance co-operation on quantum technology, artificial intelligence (AI), technological sovereignty and digital identities. Developing and using AI will help boost productivity and innovation. It will also improve services in both the private and public sectors. The Presidency will encourage a stronger Nordic approach to safe and robust digital infrastructure, computing power and AI models and reduce vulnerability by expanding the range of suppliers and working more closely together at the Nordic and European levels. It will also help to link Nordic companies and knowledge communities more closely to markets, research environments and technology value chains in areas where the Nordic Region has particular strengths. However, we must achieve this while paying due attention to data security, the protection of personal data, accountability and trust. This will involve encouraging dialogue between and joint decision-making by the social partners. This work will also involve developing a shared understanding of the need for digital infrastructure, regulation, access to computing power and data, language models, and skills enhancement in research, education and the workplace.

The Nordic-Baltic collaboration **New Nordics AI** will be one of the tools the Presidency uses to increase the use and assure the quality of the business community's use of AI throughout the Region. **Artificial intelligence** is an extremely powerful technology with huge potential, but it can also pose significant security risks. The Presidency will follow up on the international appeal by the Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre and the President of Finland, Alexander Stubb, calling for better control over the development of the most advanced AI models, and encourage greater transparency, more evaluation and closer international coordination in this area. To capitalise on the opportunities this technology offers, **AI security** and measures governing the development of leading AI models must keep pace with technological progress. The Presidency will promote co-operation on research, expertise, evaluation and standards in the field of AI security. It will also seek to coordinate Nordic and Baltic approaches to AI companies, encouraging transparency, internal accountability and external evaluations. The Presidency will also seek to coordinate with processes in other multilateral forums, including the UN and OECD, to promote new knowledge, joint standards and ensure human governance, oversight and control.

New Nordics AI is setting up a new Nordic network for **language models,** which will bring together national developers and provide a platform to discuss challenges and opportunities and identify relevant opportunities for Nordic co-operation. The Presidency will put in the effort needed to get this network up and running.

In 2025, the Nordic heads of government adopted a joint declaration on **quantum technology** to make the Nordic Region more competitive in the field, drive innovation and lay the foundations for future technological break-throughs. The follow-up work on this declaration will be crucial to realising the ambition to make the Nordic Region a world-leading destination for quantum-technology companies, inward investment and talent.

The Presidency will build on the Danish-Faroese Presidency's strategic focus on this technology and follow up on the declaration. As part of its leadership of the Nordic Quantum Alliance, the Presidency will actively seek to make the Nordic Region a preferred destination for investments in quantum technology.

Security and digital sovereignty in the Nordic and Baltic regions will be integral to this work, as dependence on complex, global digital value chains creates new vulnerabilities and critical dependencies. The Presidency will follow up on previous work on security checks for staff working in critical digital infrastructure, joint approaches to staff vetting, and the potential for additional cross-border digital cables. We will promote discussion on how Nordic and Nordic-Baltic co-operation can contribute to further diversification of supply chains, open-source code and open standards, with a view to boosting co-creation and recycling, and to reducing supplier lock-in. We will also promote joint Nordic-Baltic discussions on AI sovereignty.

Research is a key pillar of Nordic co-operation. The Presidency will prioritise collaboration between research and business, research-based innovation, new technologies and greater investment by business in research. We will promote the Nordic Region as a centre for research and innovation in an uncertain world, prioritise co-operation on emerging technologies and help follow up on the Danish-Faroese Presidency's analysis of the Nordic Region as a hub for research and innovation. We will bring together stakeholders from research, business and the public sector for Nordic Research and Innovation Days. The idea is to promote closer Nordic co-operation on research and innovation, highlight Nordic expertise and competitiveness, and reinforce the Region's position in European and international forums.

A well-functioning labour market, with fair competition, adaptability and decent working conditions, is a key prerequisite for Nordic competitiveness and the sustainability of the Nordic welfare states. With this in mind, the Presidency will prioritise **job security and broad participation.** We will ramp up efforts to combat workplace-related crime and social dumping by improving information sharing and coordinating enforcement more effectively. Including vulnerable groups is important for employment levels and the sustainability of welfare systems. The Presidency will therefore place emphasis on preventive occupational health and safety efforts and a well-functioning social dialogue, so that more people can remain in work for longer, and to promote an inclusive labour market that safeguards health and rights. The Nordic countries can also work together to ensure the right skills are available, including by forging stronger links between education and the world of work, and by promoting lifelong learning. To promote knowledge-based and forward-looking solutions, the Presidency will encourage research into the consequences of AI for the labour market, the working environment and labour law.

Security of supply, open trade and access to essential public services and resources are key framework conditions for long-term competitiveness. Now that all Nordic countries belong to the same defence alliance, it is natural to view the Region's resources collectively, including in times of crisis and war. The Presidency will pursue a binding new Nordic agreement to remove trade

barriers in times of crisis and war, with a view to functioning as a unified and robust supply region. Such an agreement would also facilitate information sharing and pave the way for joint preparedness initiatives. This work will be coordinated with the other work already being done by the Nordic Security of Supply Network (NSSN) and will be in line with the recent Joint Nordic Declaration on Security of Supply. Norway is responsible for following up on the declaration and the NSSN. We will organise a conference as part of the Nordic Supplies Summit series in autumn 2027.

On the grounds that **health preparedness** is a prerequisite for strong regional defence, the Presidency will seek to remove barriers to pan-Nordic healthcare and boost the Region's overall capacity to provide medical assistance in times of crisis and war. We will continue co-operation on resilience and preparedness, using the Presidency to strengthen resilience across all sectors and levels, from individuals to society, in line with revised NATO and EU guidelines. We will also continue work on combatting **antimicrobial resistance (AMR).** AMR is one of the biggest global health challenges. The WHO ranks it among the top ten threats to public health, and addressing it is closely linked to national and global health preparedness. The Presidency will also investigate the potential for Nordic co-operation on **clinical trials and health data.**

Space technology encompasses a range of functions crucial to a functioning modern society, including resource management, transport, power supply, emergency services, environmental monitoring, defence and national security. The Presidency will follow up on the 2025 declaration 'Strengthening Nordic Dialogue on Space Issues', including through the Nordic Space Dialogue roundtable, which provides a platform for structured dialogue, collaboration and arriving at joint Nordic positions.





Photos Eivind Senneset, Fredrik Posse, Eirik Skarstein

A **socially sustainable** and **resilient** Nordic Region

The current security situation demands that we pay greater attention to the link between democratic resilience and national security. Stepping up our efforts to counter influence campaigns by foreign states will strengthen Nordic resilience in the face of complex threats.

The Nordic countries face challenges that affect social sustainability and society's capacity to cope with crises. Increasing inequality and demographic change are placing additional pressure on welfare systems and giving rise to new tensions. In the face of this, the Nordic Region must reaffirm its fundamental strengths – high levels of trust, democratic stability and broad participation – and pass them on to future generations. The Nordic welfare model, together with volunteering, local communities and a strong civil society, contributes to social cohesion, solidarity and resilience in the face of change and crises.

A well-functioning democracy requires that people are able to participate in public discourse without fear of harassment, threats or reprisals. The Presidency will use the Nordic Council of Ministers' *Method Development for Increased Participation* initiative to improve opportunities for the people of the Region – in particular, children and young people – to influence democratic decisions. We will also further develop co-operation on freedom of expression, gender equality and trust in institutions, as well as combatting disinformation and polarisation. Key themes will include algorithm-driven information flows, young people's media use and the role of digital platforms in public discourse.

As part of this work, the Presidency will make the **conditions in which children and young people grow up** a key priority. The Nordic countries need to work more closely together on issues such as mental health challenges, loneliness and social exclusion, combined with the significant role of social media in everyday life. The Presidency will pave the way for new research, and for our countries to share information and experiences relating to promoting good mental health, preventing social exclusion, and providing safe and inclusive environments for children and young people.

In line with this, the Presidency will follow up on the 2026 meeting of prime ministers in Copenhagen on technology and **the protection of children and young people online**, including the work on a joint Nordic declaration on digital upbringing. We will contribute to the overall Nordic efforts in this field, including work on age limits and verification on social media, children's rights online, and measures to combat harmful content, radicalisation, sexual abuse and exploitation on digital platforms. Children and young people's experiences and perspectives are the key to this work. The Presidency will establish dialogue with young people from the whole of the Nordic Region, including through the project "Safer digital democracy for children and young people".

Education plays a key role in promoting inclusion and participation and in improving society's long-term resilience. In early years and education, the Presidency will focus on the school of the future and initiatives that benefit the youngest children. We will follow up on co-operation on learning outcomes and basic skills, with a particular emphasis on literacy. Other key issues include AI use in schools and education's role in strengthening democratic preparedness and resilience. As part of this work, the we will bring together Nordic stakeholders for a literacy conference that will look at the links between language, reading and democratic preparedness.

Norway will also continue to develop Nordic co-operation on future skills, particularly in **the STEM subjects.** For example, we will bring together stakeholders for an intersectoral conference that will look at various current initiatives relating to the skills of the future in their broader context, including the Nordic project *Future Skills – bridging the competence gap*.

Over the years, the Nordic countries have built up a close working relationship on the **prevention of terrorism and violent extremism.** The Presidency will continue this work by supporting initiatives that generate information about trends, risk factors and effective preventive measures. These efforts will help to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in crime, stop recruitment by criminal groups, and combat organised cross-border and gang-related crime. The Presidency will challenge the biggest technology companies and service providers to take greater responsibility for preventing online crime

Artistic freedom is essential to freedom of expression, and access to a free and vibrant cultural life encourages active citizenship and a sense of social belonging. From this perspective, the Presidency will address themes such as children's and young people's participation and willingness to express themselves, the importance of culture for democratic preparedness, indigenous and minority national cultures and co-operation on culture throughout the Nordic Region.

The Presidency attaches importance to the initiative to encourage more intersectoral dialogue on the role of culture as part of societal security. In particular, we will promote Nordic-Baltic dialogue on the importance of **literature, literacy and language** for democratic resilience under the heading "Language is preparedness, books are civilisation". It will also emphasise the importance of the media and an independent arts and culture sector from a total defence perspective and support the Nordic-Baltic initiative on cultural heritage and preparedness.

The Nordic Language Declaration is important to the Nordic sense of affinity and integration. In addition to traditional themes such as **understanding neighbouring languages,** the Presidency will continue to address the consequences of new technology for languages and literacy. We will also improve co-operation on Sámi languages and education, including following up on Nordic Council recommendations.

At a time of growing polarisation on issues of **gender, equality and rights,** the Nordic Region must be a unifying force for equality, freedom and inclusion, and a driving force in ensuring that everyone is able to live a free and safe life. Opposing equality is a threat to human rights and democracy. At the international level, we are seeing mounting pressure on women's rights, the rights of LGBT+ people and in particular the right to bodily autonomy, sexuality and reproduction. The Presidency will put even more effort into work in these areas, Including through the *Pushing for Progress initiative,* which enhances Nordic coordination and mobilisation to counter opposition to equality.

Digital platforms contribute to debates on gender, rights and identity, and spread them beyond national borders. The Presidency will map and analyse media coverage and organise Nordic roundtable discussions on how digital information flows affect equality, attitudes towards gender roles, and sex and gender diversity in the Nordic Region.





Photos Hendrik Morkel, Tobias Bjorkli, Cottonbro

Standing together in the face of **uncertainty**

The Norwegian Presidency will build on the work of its predecessors. In particular, it will focus more closely on security, preparedness, competitiveness and the green transition. Continuity and progress are crucial to Nordic co-operation at a time of rapid change and increasing uncertainty.

In March 2026, the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation decided to set up a commission tasked with putting forward proposals for updating the Helsinki Treaty and other measures that would help put the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland on an equal footing in Nordic co-operation. To future-proof Nordic co-operation, the relevant ministers have agreed to review the current structure and content of regional co-operation. Norway will lead these discussions in 2027.

Budget work will be a key task in 2027. The Nordic Council of Ministers needs to adopt a 2028 budget and indicative frameworks for 2029 and 2030. It is important that we discuss the budget with the Nordic Council to ensure that co-operation continues to receive robust political support, which underpins its stability.

The Norwegian Presidency marks the start of the final phase of Vision 2030. The OECD has been tasked with preparing a Vision 2030 progress report to identify what has been achieved and where greater efforts may be needed. The report will be an important source of information for any course corrections in the run-up to 2030. During the Norwegian Presidency, work will begin on evaluating Vision 2030 and discussing the long-term priorities for Nordic co-operation beyond the end of the decade. This will pave the way for broad and strategic discussions on the structure, working methods and international role of the Nordic Council of Ministers in the years to come. Norway will use the Presidency to launch a broad strategic discussion on the Nordic Region's place in the world after 2030, including how co-operation can contribute to greater security, competitiveness and democratic resilience at a time when the international order is becoming more fragmented.

About this publication

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The Nordic Council of Ministers

The Nordic Council of Ministers is the official body for inter-governmental co-operation between Åland, Denmark, Finland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

In 2019, the Nordic prime ministers presented a vision of the Nordic Region as the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030. The work of the Nordic Council of Ministers is designed to pursue that goal by making the Nordic Region green, competitive and socially sustainable.

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