



Nordregio

How can labour market mobility in the Nordic Region be increased?

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NORDREGIO POLICY BRIEF 2023:2



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The Nordic Council of Ministers' vision is that the Nordic Region should be the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030. Increased labour market mobility between the Nordic countries is one of the keys to achieving the Nordic vision.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase coordination of rules and regulations between the Nordic countries to facilitate cross-border labour market mobility

a) Make electronic identification across the Nordic Region possible.

Electronic identification is pivotal to enabling people to live and work in another Nordic country, for example, to get access to public services and banking services. Today e-identification does not work across national borders. To solve this problem, e-identification from one Nordic country should be recognisable and useable in all Nordic countries, or the threshold to acquire e-identification in another Nordic country should be lowered.

b) Make it easy and transparent to pay tax and access social security services for people that commute to another Nordic country, work in multiple countries or work remotely.

Through digital tools, work has become less place-dependent and the possibilities for people to work in different places have increased. However, public administration systems, such as the taxation system and the social security

systems, are not coordinated and do not reflect the new situation. To increase cross-border labour market mobility in the Nordic Region, it must be smooth.

2. Support initiatives to increase interest in Nordic culture and languages to sustain Nordic integration

a) Increase support for knowledge and information-sharing activities about Nordic languages and culture, especially among young people

Knowledge and interest in Nordic languages and culture are decreasing. Support for knowledge and information-sharing activities, especially targeted towards young people, will help increase interest in the Nordic languages and culture, thereby fostering increased mobility and integration in the Nordic Region, including labour market mobility.

b) Increase support for information about study and work opportunities in the Nordic Region

Nordic labour market mobility is modest; some figures point to it being below the EU average. To support labour market mobility between the Nordic countries, availability of information about Nordic study and work opportunities should be increased.

3. Increase Nordic collaboration to support Nordic Freedom of Movement

a) Increase Nordic collaboration in all fields and at all levels of government

Nordic Freedom of Movement was introduced in the 1950s. However, it is hampered every time border restrictions are introduced, as has been the case several times in the last decade. Nordic Freedom of movement is a prerequisite for cross-border labour market mobility. To sustain Nordic Freedom of Movement, public authorities need to collaborate across national borders, in all fields that relate to supporting the freedom of movement and at all levels of government.

Fact box: Labour market mobility in the Nordic Region

Although work in another Nordic country has been possible since the establishment of the joint Nordic labour market in the 1950s, only 1.7% of the working-age population work in a different Nordic country from the one in which they were born, and only 0.5 % commute to a job in another Nordic country. Nordic cross-border commuting is below the EU average of 1%.

Learn more: <https://pub.nordregio.org/snr22/#>

Fact box: About this research and the Policy Brief

This Policy Brief is based on the research project *Re-start competence mobility in the Nordic Region*, which is part of the regional co-operation programme and the "Green, Innovative and Resilient Regions" thematic group funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Apart from quantitative data analysis, interviews were conducted with 37 key stakeholders in three case study regions and a workshop with 25 participants was held in November 2022, including an open-ended survey. The three case study regions were Greater Copenhagen, Vestfold Telemark and Greenland. The research results have been published in State of the Nordic Region 2022, a research working paper and a story map.

This Policy Brief has been developed in collaboration with the project's reference group, which includes representatives from Info Norden and Nordic cross-border committees.

Learn more: <https://nordregio.org/research/re-start-competence-mobility-in-the-nordic-region/>

Fact box: Nordic institutions and services to support Nordic Freedom of Movement

The Nordic Freedom of Movement Council <https://www.norden.org/sv/fri-bevegelighet-og-grensehindre> works to remove cross-border obstacles between the Nordic countries. Learn more about its work: <https://www.norden.org/sv/granshinderdatabasen> <https://www.norden.org/sv/publication/granshinderradets-arsrapport-2022>

Info Norden <https://www.norden.org/sv/info-norden> provides those wishing to move, work, study or start a business in the Nordic countries with general information and shortcuts.

Grensetjänsten <https://www.grensetjansten.com/> and **Öresund Direkt** <https://www.oresunddirekt.se/se> provide information about moving, working, studying and doing business across the Swedish-Norwegian and Swedish-Danish borders.

About this publication

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Nordregio

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