

The Nordic Council of Ministers and You



DIFFICULT WORDS IN THE TEXT



MINISTER: A person in the government of a country who is in charge of a particular area. A minister for the environment is for example responsible for matters relating to the environment, pollution and nature.

DEMOCRACY: This means the whole people of a country can decide who is to lead the country. Anyone over the age of 18 can vote when there is an election, and everyone is allowed to have their say.

POLITICIAN: A person who is elected to make decisions, for example in the local council of a municipality, in a regional council or in the national parliament. In Denmark, the parliament is called *Folketinget*.

ORGANISATION: When many people come together to do something, or because they agree that an area is important, it is often called an organisation. There are many different kinds of organisation. The Danish Red Cross, the Danish Cancer Society and the Danish Football Association are some of the organisations found in Denmark.

RESEARCH: When experts investigate something very thoroughly to find out new things, it is called research.

KNOWLEDGE: What we know about different areas of our lives and the world. When we find out something new, for example through science, we say that we gain new knowledge.

GENERAL SECRETARY: The overall leader of an organisation is sometimes called a general secretary.

GOVERNMENT: The top leadership in a country. The prime minister is the head of the government.

POLICY: The plans or goals that politicians make for what a country should be like to live in, or how it should change.

UN: This stands for the United Nations. The UN is an organisation with representatives from all the countries of the world, who meet to discuss the problems in the world and how to solve them.

EU: This stands for the European Union. The EU is a collaboration between 27 countries in Europe, where common rules and goals are laid down for areas such as health, the climate and much more. Sweden, Denmark and Finland are members of the EU.

AWARD: Another word for a prize – for example when someone wins a competition.

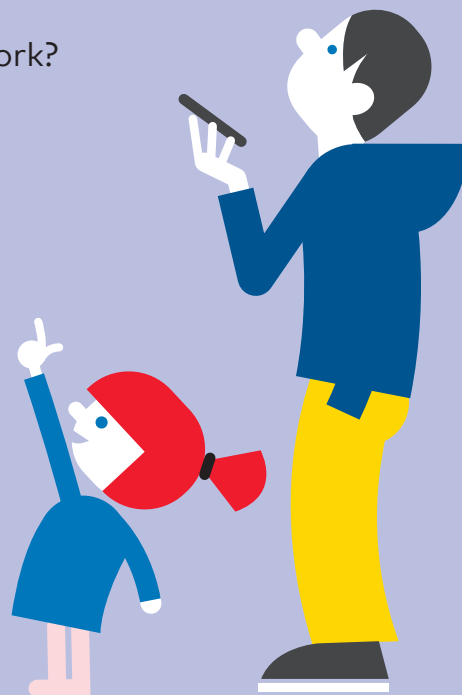


HI THERE!

We are pleased that you have opened this folder, where you can learn everything that is worth knowing know about the Nordic region's strongest partnership: the Nordic Council of Ministers. You might think that the Nordic Council of Ministers is just something for adults, but in fact it's also important for you – and for all other children and young people in the Nordic region. First and foremost, the Nordic Council of Ministers is a co-operation between the Nordic countries. You can read more about us right here!

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FACTS ABOUT THE NORDIC REGION

Most of the Nordic countries are quite small, but overall the Nordic region is a gigantic area. In fact, the Nordic region covers no less than 3.5 million square kilometres, which is the same as 528 million football pitches. Greenland makes up well over half – 60% – of the Nordic region's total area.

More than 27 million people live in the Nordic region, and more than seven different languages are spoken there: Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Icelandic, Finnish, Greenlandic, Faroese and several different Sami languages. The Sami languages are spoken by the Sami people, who live in the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia.



What is the 1971 Nordic Council of Ministers?

The Nordic Council of Ministers has existed since 1971, and is a council that helps the Nordic countries to co-operate. The Nordic countries are Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, but Greenland, the Faroe Islands and the Åland Islands are also members of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

But the Nordic Council of Ministers is not just one council. In all, there are 12 councils of ministers, who work on various topics. In the councils, the **ministers** from the Nordic countries meet up and discuss their separate areas. For example, all the climate and environment ministers meet and talk about the climate and the environment. The same goes for education, health and much more.

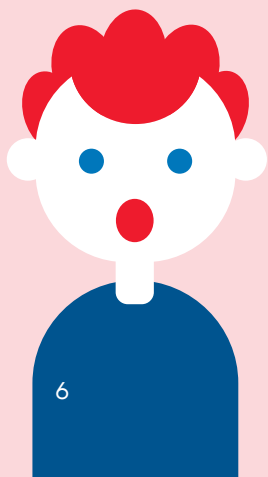
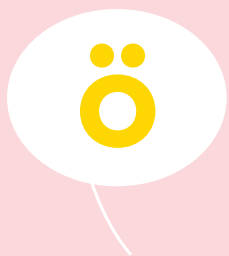
The five Nordic countries take turns leading the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers. They do this for one year at a time. In this way, the countries can take turns deciding what the Nordic Council of Ministers should particularly focus on.





DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The Nordic languages are written in the Latin alphabet. The letters æ and ø are common to Danish and Norwegian, corresponding to Swedish ä and ö, while Icelandic has æ and ö.



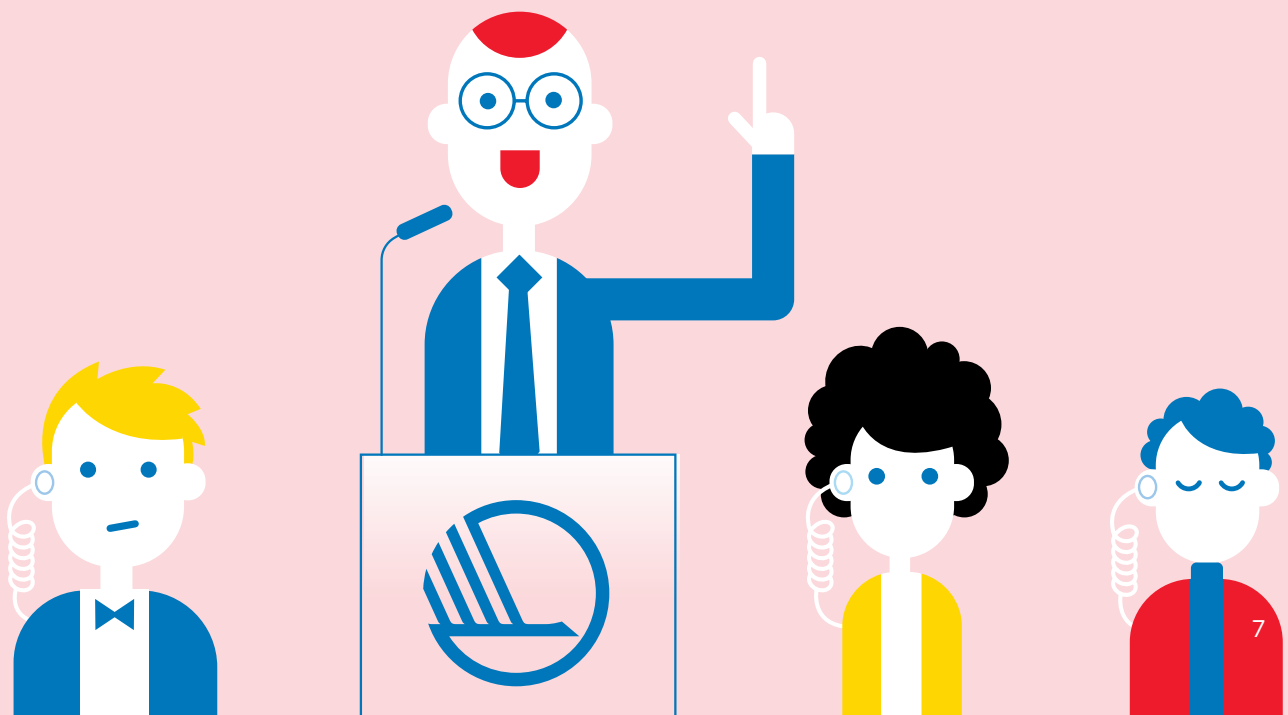
Why are we co-operating in the Nordic Region, especially?



The Nordic countries have many things in common, and we've also been close together throughout history. Several of our countries have languages that are similar to each other, especially Danish, Swedish and Norwegian. What's more, our everyday lives are very similar in the Nordic countries, and we have organised our schools and our working days in a similar way to each other.

We also have a common view of **democracy** and of how those in authority should behave towards people living in the country. At the same time, all of the Nordic countries have many associations and **organisations** that anyone can join. In this way, they can help to influence the decisions that **politicians** make. The Nordic Council of Ministers co-operates a lot with those kinds of associations and organisations.

Because the Nordic countries have all these things in common, it's easier for them to co-operate.





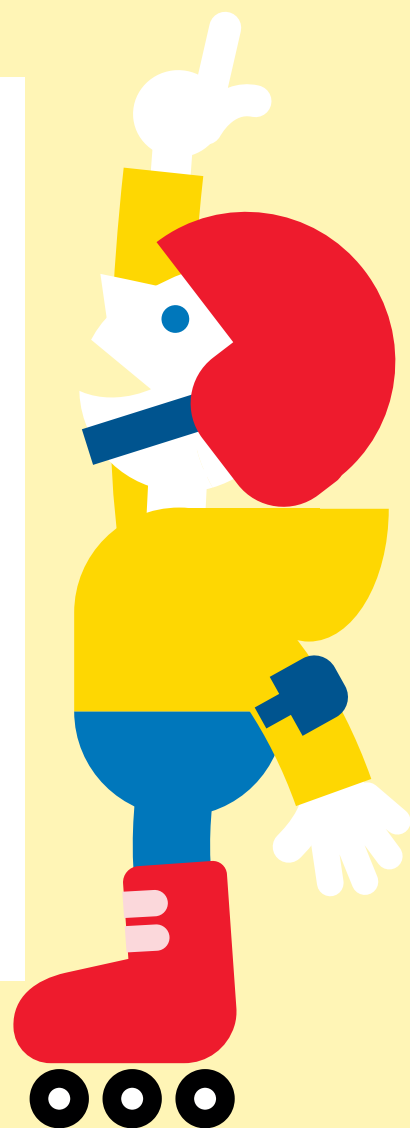
WHAT THE NORDIC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WORKS FOR

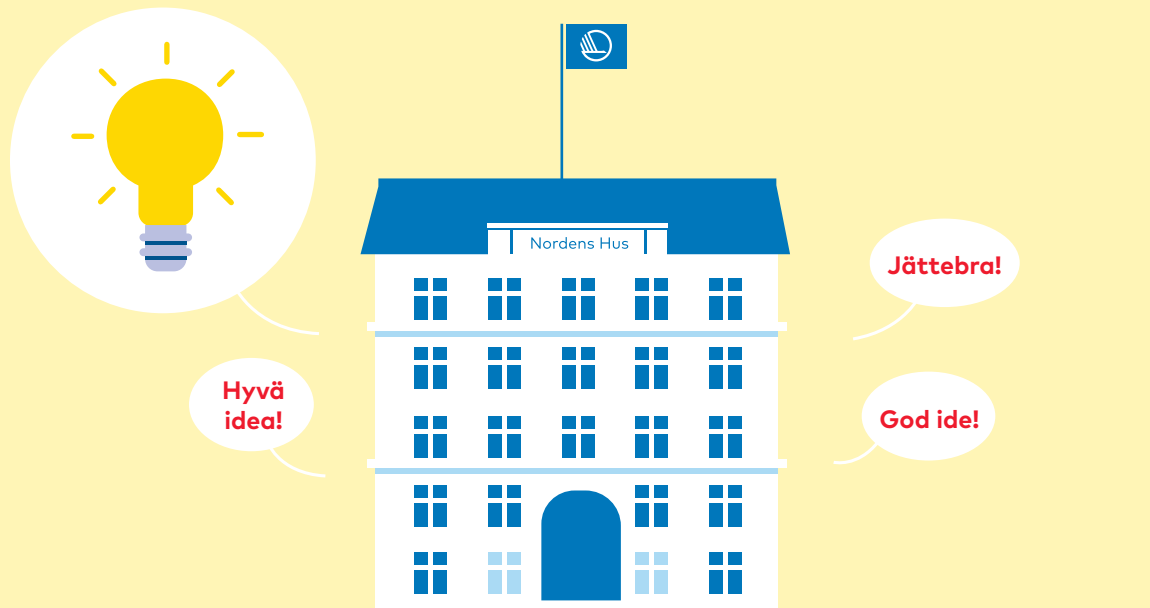
It must remain possible to travel across all of the countries in the Nordic region.

The Nordic region must be sustainable. That means that the way we live in the Nordic countries must not be harmful to the planet or to the people on the planet.

Gender equality is very important in the Nordic countries. Equality means that men and women have the same opportunities and are not treated differently.

Politicians must listen to children and young people. Children and young people must have the opportunity to influence their own world and future.





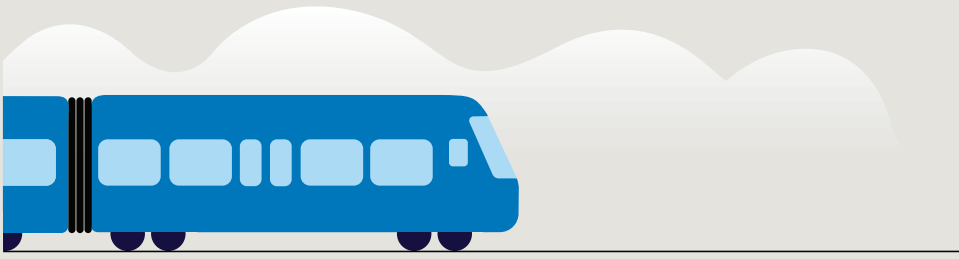
What does the Nordic Council of Ministers do?

The ministers co-operate to decide what the Council of Ministers should work on. When they meet, they discuss and decide what work to do in the Nordic Council of Ministers within their specific areas. When they make decisions, they have to all agree. They also decide what to spend money on.

The Nordic Council of Ministers also has what is called a secretariat, which is a kind of office. People from all over the Nordic region work here, and Swedish, Norwegian and Danish are spoken. This is where the work is done that the ministers have decided on. In the secretariat, there is a **general secretary** who manages the work that is done every day in the Nordic Council of Ministers. But it is the ministers, and therefore all the **governments** in the Nordic countries, who decide what the work should be about.





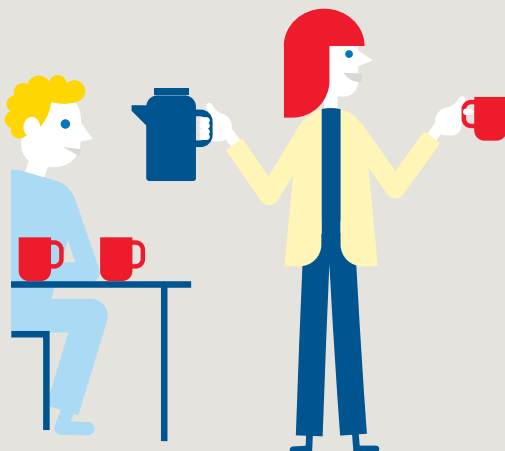


How does the Nordic Council of Ministers work?

The work of the Nordic Council of Ministers is mainly about getting people from the various Nordic countries to meet. That's why the Nordic Council of Ministers helps various people from the Nordic countries to co-operate with each other. For example, organisations that work with children's and young people's rights might be given money to hold a meeting for the whole Nordic region. The Nordic Council of Ministers also gives money to people who work with making films, books or leaflets on various topics.

Those who work in the Nordic Council of Ministers' secretariat gather **research** and **knowledge** within the various areas. Then politicians in the governments and parliaments of the different countries can use that knowledge to form their **policies**. The Nordic Council of Ministers has for example decided on the healthy food advice that is used today in all the Nordic countries, such as in schools.

The Nordic Council of Ministers also holds large meetings itself – such as meetings where children can have an opportunity to tell politicians what they think about different things.





What do we get out of co-operating?

In the Nordic countries, we get a lot out of sharing knowledge with each other, because the Nordic countries are so similar to each other. If, for example, something works really well in Sweden, then there is a good chance that it will also work really well in the other Nordic countries.

Co-operation also means that we become stronger. The Nordic countries are all small countries, so it's important for us to stand together if we want our voices to be heard in the world. That way we can have more influence among the big countries in the world.

The Nordic countries often co-operate in the **UN**, for example. Here we become stronger when we stand together, so that we can influence other countries – for example in such areas as children and young people, or climate and the environment.

The Nordic countries that are members of the **EU** also co-operate a lot there.



Dear Nordic Council of
Ministers. We have a good idea!



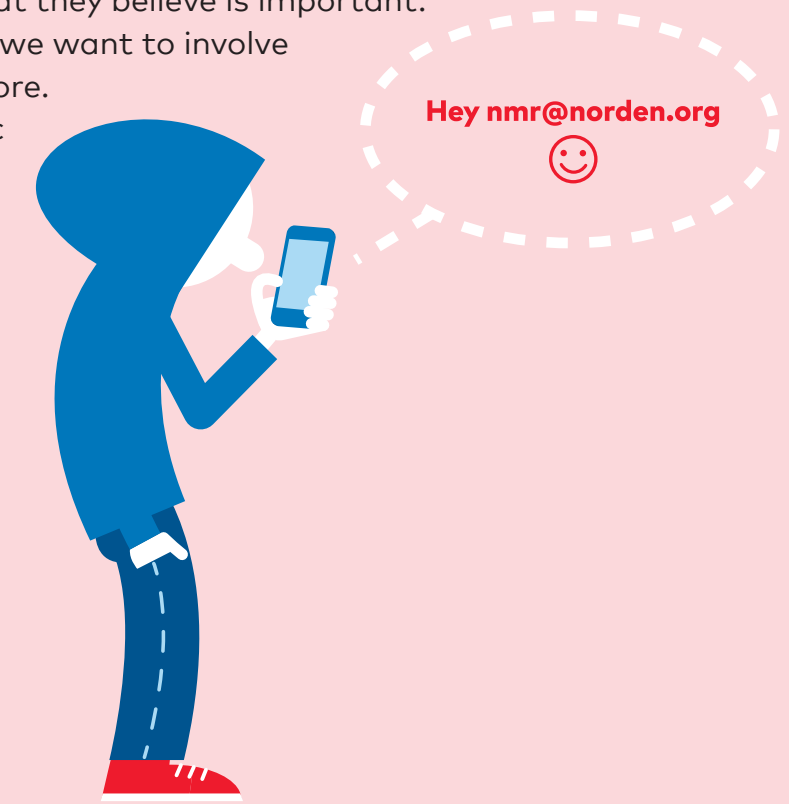
The Nordic Council of Ministers works for children and young people

One of the most important goals for the Nordic Council of Ministers is to make sure children and young people in the Nordic region have a good life. So in all the things that the Council of Ministers do, we make sure to give lots of thought to how it will affect children and young people, and how children and young people can have an influence.

We work closely with the organisations that represent children and young people in all the Nordic countries, to ensure that young people are heard and involved when the countries' politicians have to make decisions.

We wish school students to be able to meet across countries.
We create joint projects for children about the Nordic languages.
We support projects in which children and young people across the Nordic region can fight for what they believe is important.
In the Nordic Council of Ministers, we want to involve children and young people even more.
You can always contact the Nordic Council of Ministers if you have an idea for a project in which children and young people in the Nordic countries can do something together.

You can send your idea to:
nmr@norden.org



Where you can meet the Nordic Council of Ministers yourself



AT THE BORDER

If you go travelling in the Nordic region, you can clearly see how the Nordic countries work closely together in the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Nordic region is a single area. If you live in one Nordic country, you can freely travel across borders to the other countries without having to show a passport. At some very special times, however, there may still be border controls. This happened for example in 2020, when the new coronavirus came to Europe and many people became ill, including in the Nordic countries. But normally, you can freely cross the border to the other Nordic countries without stopping. It is also easy to work or take an education in one of the other countries.



ON THE BOOKSHELF

The Nordic Council of Ministers provides funding so that a large number of books for children and young people published in the Nordic countries can be translated into the other Nordic languages. We do this to support the Nordic community through books.



IN THE SUPERMARKET

You can actually come across the Nordic Council of Ministers when you do your shopping. The Nordic Council of Ministers is behind the Nordic Ecolabel, which was one of the very first eco-labels. This is a label that some products can get if they meet some health and environmental requirements.

HERE YOU CAN READ ABOUT SOME OF THE THINGS THE NORDIC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WORKS WITH

LAW AND JUSTICE: If it is to become even easier to co-operate in the Nordic region, it is important that the laws and regulations in the various countries are similar. That's part of the work of getting the Nordic region to be even better integrated.

WORKING LIFE: It must be pleasant to go to work in the Nordic region. You should not become ill or worn down by your job. It must also be easy to hire employees for your company, no matter where in the Nordic region you wish to hire them from. That's why the Nordic countries co-operate a lot on the rules of the labour market.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE: The Nordic countries all want to take the lead when it comes to the environment and climate. All of them are already doing a lot to become more climate-friendly and sustainable, but we can always do things better. This is an area where the Nordic countries can have an influence over other countries in the world, so that they, too, can take better care of the world.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: The Nordic region must be the best place in the world for children and young people. That means that the Nordic countries must ensure that children and young people thrive, and that they know that

they have the right to be heard. They must also be able to influence decisions that concern them.

CULTURE: Art and culture are an important part of the shared community between the Nordic countries. The art and culture created in the Nordic countries reflects the values we have in common.

EDUCATION AND RESEARCH: The Nordic Council of Ministers also works to ensure that there is a good community in the areas of education and research in the Nordic region. This must benefit children, young people and adults alike.

EQUALITY: In the Nordic countries there must be equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of gender. Equality means that men and women have the same opportunities and are not treated differently. The Nordic countries have been working together to promote gender equality for more than 40 years.

LANGUAGES: It is important that we in the Nordic region continue to try to understand each other in the languages we have in common. This applies especially to Danish, Norwegian and Swedish. It also makes it easier to travel, take an education and work in each other's countries if we know each other's languages.

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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, 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. Shared Nordic values help the region solidify its position as one of the world's most innovative and competitive.

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The Nordic Council of Ministers is the world's oldest community of its kind. In the Council, the Nordic countries co-operate in all kinds of areas from the climate and the environment to education, workplaces, and children and young people.

The Nordic region contains three areas, five countries and 27 million people. When we work together in the region, we are stronger and can make a difference for the whole world.

In this folder you can read more about the Nordic Council of Ministers.

