

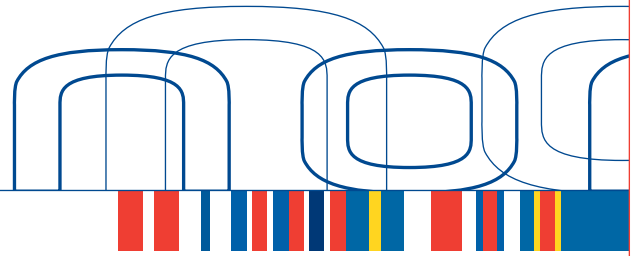


norden

Nordic Council

NORDIC COUNCIL

FACTS ON NORDIC COOPERATION



The Nordic Community

To us living in the region, Nordic cooperation is so natural that we give it little thought as we go about our daily business. Our common Nordic history and culture and the similarity of our languages contribute greatly to this sense of community. Cross-border networking is a matter of course and cooperation works smoothly, with a minimum of formal restrictions. However, many of the opportunities we have for working together are the result of formal agreements between the Nordic governments.

Since 1952, the Nordic Council has pursued a policy that says that we gain by acting collectively instead of each country doing the same things on its own. As a result, we enjoy freedom of movement across borders, we are able to work and study in each other's countries without a lot of red tape, and we are entitled to health care if we fall ill in another Nordic country. The Nordic armed forces participate in common procurement schemes and we can boast of a Nordic action plan for environmental protection.

The Nordic Council

The Nordic Council is the forum for Nordic parliamentary cooperation, involving MPs from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden as well as of the three autonomous areas: the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and the Åland Islands.

The Nordic Council takes initiatives and acts in an advisory and supervisory capacity on issues and matters of interest for official Nordic cooperation.

The Nordic Council was established in 1952 and its statutes were set out in the 1962 Helsinki Agreement. According to these statutes, the parties undertake "to seek to preserve and further develop cooperation among the countries in legal, cultural, social, and financial fields as well as in matters relating to transport and environmental protection." More binding cooperation has since been extended to include foreign policy and security-policy issues.

The Nordic Council of Ministers, established in 1971, is the forum for Nordic governmental cooperation. (See the fact sheet on the Nordic Council of Ministers.)

Delegations

The individual Nordic parliaments appoint the 87 members of the Nordic Council. Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Sweden have 20 members each. The Danish delegation includes two members from the Faroe Islands and two from Greenland. The Finnish delegation includes two members from the Åland Islands. Iceland has seven members.

As far as possible, the political composition of the national delegations should reflect the balance of power in the national parliaments.

Party groups

The members of the Nordic Council work together in cross-border party groups. There are currently four party groups in the Nordic Council: *the Social Democratic Group, the Conservative Group, the Centre Group, and the Leftwing Socialist and Green Group.*

A party group must have at least five members and must represent at least three Nordic countries. Consequently, a number of members of the Nordic Council do not belong to any of these party groups. Each party group has its own secretaries.

For more information on the party groups, see www.norden.org.

Committees

The Nordic Council has five committees:

The Culture, Education, and Training Committee

The committee deals with issues regarding culture, education, training, and research. The committee works with the following areas: general culture and art in the Nordic countries and abroad; the multicultural and multiethnic Nordic region; film and media; languages; sports; the voluntary sector; children's and youth culture; primary and secondary education; the Nordic education and training market; general and adult education; life-long learning; research; and research training and exchange programs.

The Welfare Committee

The committee deals with welfare, social, and health-care policy issues.

The committee works with the following areas: welfare and social-security schemes; social and health care; the disabled; construction and housing; family affairs; children and young people; problems related to drugs, alcohol, and other types of substance abuse.

Citizens' and Consumer Rights Committee

The committee deals with matters that concern citizens' and consumer rights as well as general issues concerning democracy, human rights, and gender equality. The committee deals with the following areas: democracy; human rights; civil rights; gender equality; consumer affairs; food safety; combating crime, including international crime and terrorism; legislation; immigration and refugee issues; and cooperation against racism.

Environment and Natural Resources Committee

The committee deals with questions concerning environmental and nature protection. The committee works with the following areas: the environment; agriculture and forestry; fisheries; sustainable development; and energy.

Business and Industry Committee

The committee deals with frameworks and parameters for the economy, production and trade, including freedom of movement in the markets and in the labor market in the Nordic countries. The committee works with the following areas: business and industry; the internal market; freedom of movement; the removal of border obstacles; commerce; regional and structural aid; employment and the labor market; the working environment; infrastructure and transport; communications; and information technology.

The Control Committee and the Nordic budget

One of the Control Committee's tasks is to exercise parliamentary control over activities financed by joint Nordic funds.

The annual budget of the Nordic Council amounts to c. DKK 30 million and is financed by contributions from the parliaments. The annual budget of the Nordic Council of Ministers totals c. DKK 800 million and is financed by the Nordic governments. National contributions are calculated

according to a formula based on GNP (gross national product).

Read more about the Nordic Council's activities in the fact sheet on the Nordic Council of Ministers. The entire budget can be found at www.norden.org.

The Presidium

The Presidium is the Nordic Council's governing body. It consists of a President and 12 ordinary members. The presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers is held for a one-year period and rotates among the five Nordic countries. The Presidium's main task is to deal with general political and administrative issues, foreign policy and security-policy issues, and the budget. The Presidium also functions as the primary point of contact with the adjacent areas and with regional and international organizations.

From idea to result

Nordic Council procedures are similar to those of the national parliaments.

The Nordic Council of Ministers submits proposals for discussion and comment by the Council. Members, party groups, and committees submit ideas in the form of written questions or member proposals. The committees discuss these proposals and prepare a recommendation/report for consideration at the Session.

The governments involved must answer the questions within a specified time limit.

See the next page for a schematic presentation of the procedure.

The Session

The Session is the Nordic Council's highest decision-making body. It consists of the 87 members of the Nordic Council and of government representatives (the latter without voting rights). The Session convenes once a year, usually in November. It is open to the public and the Nordic countries take turns hosting it.

The Session approves the budget for Nordic cooperation and debates and adopts recommendations. It elects the President of the Council, the ordinary members of the Presidium, the chairmen of the committees, and the members of the Control Committee. The Session also appoints members to the five committees.

Meetings

The party groups, the Presidium, the committees, and the Control Committee meet four times a year as well as during the Session to deal with the Council's business.

Nordic Council prizes

The Nordic Council awards the Literature Prize, the Music Prize, the Film Prize, and the Nature and Environment Prize. Each prize, worth DKK 350,000, is presented to the prize-winner during the Session.

For further information about prize-winners and the adjudicating committees, see: www.norden.org.

The Nordic Council Secretariat

The Nordic Council Secretariat is situated in Copenhagen at the same address as the Nordic Council of Ministers' Secretariat. The Secretariat is headed by a director and prepares Council meetings along with the national secretariats and party groups.

National secretariats

Each national delegation has its own secretariat, which prepares meetings, assists in practical matters, and offers advice and guidance to the general public.

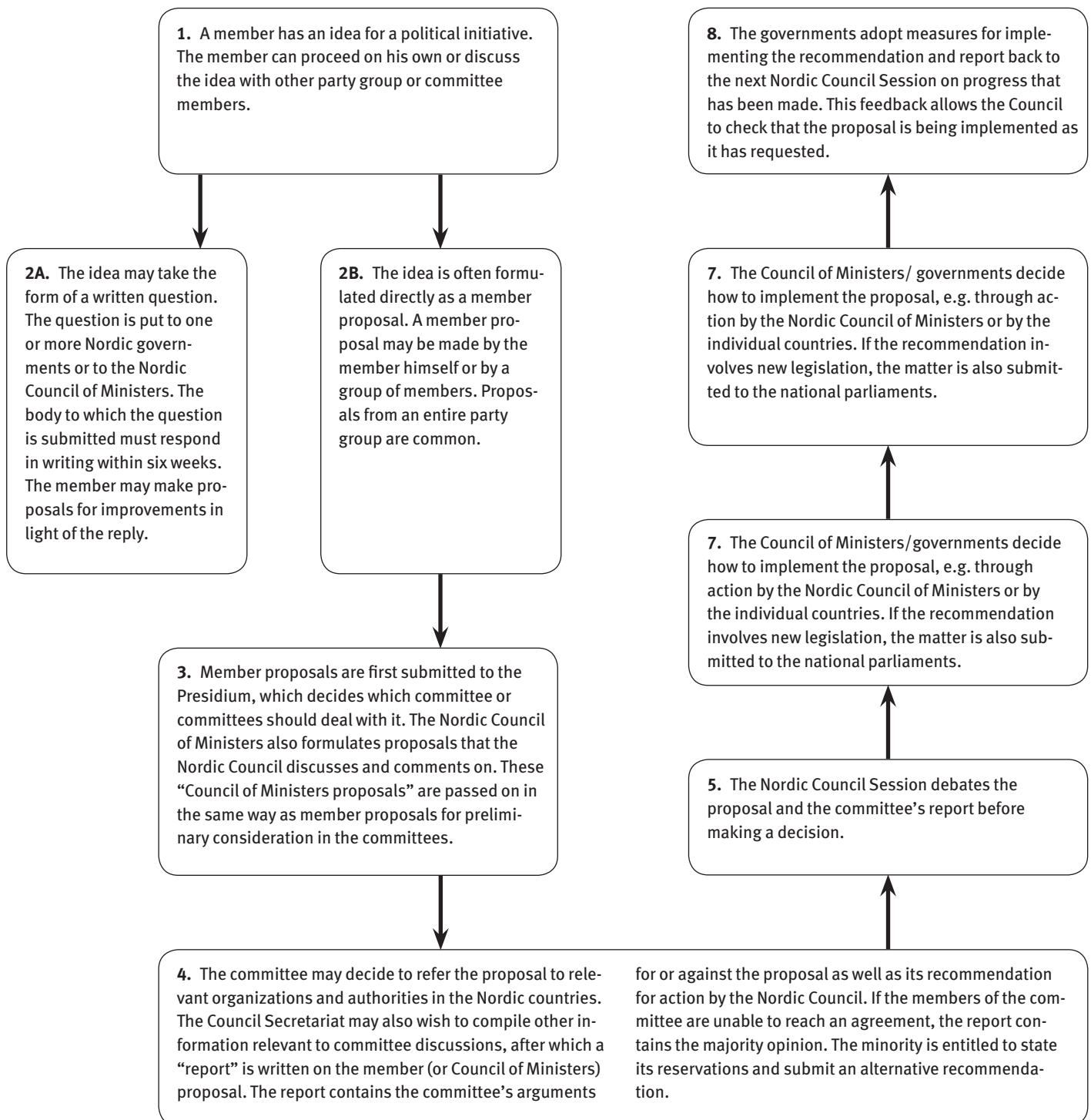
Communication

The Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers share a joint Communication Department in Copenhagen. The department publishes daily news for the web, a weekly newsletter, Top of Europe, and an extensive range of other information material.



From idea to result

An outline of the procedures followed by the Nordic Council



Nordic Council
Council Secretariat
Store Strandstræde 18
DK-1255 Copenhagen K
Tel.: + 45 33 96 04 00
Fax: + 45 33 11 18 70
E-mail: nordisk-rad@norden.org

The Nordic Council
Danish delegation
Parliament
Christiansborg
DK-1240 Copenhagen K
Tel.: + 45 33 37 55 00
Fax: + 45 33 37 59 64
E-mail: nrpost@ft.dk

The Nordic Council
Finnish delegation
Parliament
FI-00102 Helsinki
Tel.: + 358 9 4321
Fax: + 358 9 432 3529
E-mail: int.dep@eduskunta.fi

The Nordic Council
Faroese delegation
Parliament
Postbox 208
FR-110 Tórshavn
Tel.: + 298-3-10850
Fax: + 298-3-10686
E-mail: logting@logting.fo

The Nordic Council
Greenland delegation
Greenland Parliament Bureau
Postbox 1060
DK-3900 Nuuk
Tel.: + 299 230 00
Fax: + 299 246 06
Telex 90613
E-mail: landstinget@gh.gl

The Nordic Council
Icelandic delegation
International Department
Parliament
Austurstræti 14
IS-150 Reykjavík
Tel.: + 354 5 630 734
Fax: + 354 5 630 735
E-mail: lariusv@althingi.is

The Nordic Council
Norwegian delegation
Parliament
NO-0026 Oslo
Tel.: + 47 23 31 30 50
Fax: + 47 23 31 38 62
E-mail: nordiskrad.postmottak@stortinget.no

The Nordic Council
Swedish delegation
Parliament
SE-100 12 Stockholm
Tel.: + 46 8 786 4000
Fax: + 46 8 786 6129
E-mail: nr@riksdagen.se

The Nordic Council
Delegation of the Åland Islands
PB 69/Självstyrelsegården
Strandgatan
FI-22 101 Mariehamn
Tel.: + 358 182 5474
Fax: + 358 181 3302
E-mail: marine.holm-johansson@lagtinget.aland.fi

Addresses & information

Nordic Council of Ministers
Store Strandstræde 18
DK-1255 Copenhagen K
Tel +45 3396 0200
Fax +45 3396 0202

Nordic Council
Store Strandstræde 18
DK-1255 Copenhagen K
Tel +45 3396 0400
Fax +45 3311 1870

Further information
www.norden.org