

14 proposals for future Nordic co-operation in working life

Poul Nielson



Proposal 1: Obstacles to cross-border freedom of movement

The work of the Freedom of Movement Council should be supplemented with an examination of the possibility to create solutions that cut across established systems affecting limited and specifically defined groups of persons. Such an examination must necessarily be a joint Nordic task on the basis of explicit support from the governments.

Proposal 2: Migratory pressures

A special Nordic working group should be set up to collect updated state-of-play reports on an ongoing basis, carry out consolidated joint analyses (an ongoing Nordic peer review) and present proposals and recommendations for initiatives. The working group should contribute to creating the basis for a more substantial and action-oriented joint Nordic political effort in line with our fundamental values.

Proposal 3: Statistics

The Nordic governments should set up a steering group involving relevant expertise from authorities, universities and the social partners, initially to draw up a problem list of shortcomings and technical criticisms, and subsequently draw up a priority list of these and present proposals to achieve better quality and compatibility in labour market statistics. Ultimately, this work should link into the work in the ILO, OECD and EU on improving the production of statistics.

Proposal 4: Psychological working environment

The Council of Ministers for Labour should decide to upgrade efforts regarding the psycho-

logical working environment. The possibility of true Nordic harmonisation of legislation in the area should be studied, putting the psychological working environment on an equal legal footing with the physical environment. In any case a joint Nordic working programme should be developed to gather best practices, identify and develop more structured forms of co-operation in the area in the Nordic region and involve the Nordic region in a more sustained and pro-active manner in co-operation in this area in the EU.

Proposal 5: Gender equality

The gender equality issue should be prioritised in a fully horizontal manner in co-operation in working life in the Nordic region.

Proposal 6: Representativeness of organisations

The ministers should discuss specific legislative conditions, including taxation, which may curb the representativeness of labour market organisations. A list of ideas should be drawn up for use in efforts in the Nordic region and internationally to adapt to the demands we face from the fragmentation of working life.

Proposal 7: Introduction of mandatory adult and continuing training

The Nordic governments should commit to the principle of introducing mandatory adult and continuing training for everybody in the labour markets in the Nordic region and, together with the social partners, should decide to implement experimental activities via joint pilot projects as described here in the two basic models for implementation of the principle.

Read the proposals in detail:

www.norden.org/nordpub

Nordic Council of Ministers

Ved Stranden 18
DK-1061 Copenhagen K

www.norden.org

Print: Rosendahls
Copies: 300
Printed in Denmark



Proposal 8: The western Nordic region

The particular challenges that exist for job creation in the western Nordic region should be the subject of a special Nordic study, the conclusions of which should form the basis of the ministers' deliberations and the positions adopted.

Proposal 9: More politics at ministerial meetings

The agenda for ministerial meetings should be divided into A points, which are not expected to give rise to discussion, and B points, where discussion and possibly decisions are anticipated. There should be more scope than hitherto for thematic political debates between the ministers on the basis of presentations produced in broader co-operation.

Proposal 10: The Secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers should exercise a more substantive, initiating and co-ordinating role

The Secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers should exercise a more substantive, initiating and co-ordinating role in the preparation of ministerial meetings, both to ensure better coherence and incorporation of the work in the various committees and to strengthen the common Nordic dimension in the ministers' discussions.

Proposal 11: Adequate and stable financing

The governments must address the need to ensure adequate and stable financing of more ambitious Nordic co-operation in the working life area.

Proposal 12: Stronger joint branding of the core of the Nordic labour market model in the EU

Following consultations with Nordic employers' and employees' organisations, the ministers for labour should decide in principle to organise stronger joint branding of the core of the Nordic labour market model in an ongoing effort designed to create greater understanding and respect for it both in the revived Social Dialogue in the EU, in the pre-legislative work in the Commission and in more robust defence of interests in the negotiating process in Parliament and in Council following submission of a Commission proposal.

Proposal 13: Intensified co-operation with the ILO

The Council of Ministers for Labour should intensify co-operation with the ILO as part of the "Future of Work" project, work to improve labour market statistics internationally and the general dialogue on dissemination and understanding of the fundamental principles in the Nordic model. This work should be conducted in the broadest possible context in close co-operation with Nordic employers' and employees' organisations.

Proposal 14: An upgrading of Nordic co-operation in the OECD

The Council of Ministers for Labour should decide to upgrade Nordic co-operation in the OECD, both in the dialogue on fundamental principles in economic policy and the many fundamental areas relevant to labour market policy indicated here.