



Invitation: December 8, 2021

Conference regarding cooperation between the Nordic states and Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland as an example of sustainable democracy

Folketinget, Copenhagen
Wednesday 8 December 2021, at 12.30 - 16.30 (CET)

12.00 – 12.30 Light lunch hosted by the Government of Åland

12.30 – 12.45 Introductory remarks

Ms Annette Holmberg-Jansson, Minister for Nordic cooperation
Mr Thomas Blomqvist, Minister for Nordic cooperation

Speakers will be introduced by **Mr Matts Lindqvist**, Senior Adviser, Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers

12.45 – 13.05 Introduction speech

Mr Gunnar Wetterberg, Author of the book "Förbundsstaten Norden"

Historic overview of the development of the Nordic cooperation with special interest on the incorporation of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

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Nordic Council
of Ministers

First Session

13.05-13.20 **Ms Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark**, Director, Åland Islands Peace Institute
Presentation of the report on the participation of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland and their contribution to the Nordic cooperation

13.20-13.50 **Panel discussion** regarding the Nordic council of ministers' cooperation today with special interest on cooperation with the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. What have the impacts been on the Nordic cooperation?

Speakers:

Mr Thomas Blomqvist, Minister for Nordic cooperation in Finland, Chairman of the Nordic Council of Ministers

Ms Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark, Director, Åland Islands Peace Institute

Mr Bertel Haarder, President of the Nordic Council

Ms Annette Holmberg-Jansson, Minister for Nordic cooperation in Åland

Mr Petur Petersen, Head of Nordic Cooperation, Government of the Faroe Islands

Moderator: Mr Matti Pesu, Senior Research Fellow, Finnish Institute of International Affairs

Questions from the floor allowed.

13.50 – 14.10 **Coffee break**

14.10 – 14.50 **Panel discussion** regarding the Nordic council of ministers' cooperation today with special interest on how the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland can contribute to social and environmental sustainability.

Speakers:

Mr Auðunn Atlason, former member of the Nordic Committee for Co-operation, Ambassador of Iceland to Finland

Ms Paula Lehtomäki, Secretary General, Nordic Council of Ministers

Mr Flemming Møller Mortensen, Minister for Nordic cooperation, Denmark

Mr Kalistat Lund, Minister for Nordic Cooperation, Greenland

Mr Alfons Röblom, Minister of Environment, Energy and Higher Education

Ms Ella Turta Secretary General, ReGeneration 2030

Moderator: Ms Vava Lunabba, Chairman of the expert Group for Sustainable Development

Questions from the floor allowed.

14.50 – 15.10 **Coffee break**

Second session

- 15.10 - 15.20** Keynote speech, **President Tarja Halonen**, Finland, Cooperation between the Nordic states and Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland as an example of sustainable democracy
- 15.20 - 15.30** Keynote speech, **Ms Ilze Brands Kehris**, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, UN, global perspective on the Nordic cooperation with special interest on cooperation with the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland
- 15.30 - 16.10** **Panel discussion** regarding the global perspective on the Nordic cooperation with special interest on cooperation with the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. Are there lessons to be learnt globally?

Speakers:

President Tarja Halonen, Finland

Ms Natuk Lund Olsen, Head of Department, Government of Greenland

Mr Harry Jansson, Deputy Head of the Åland Government

Mr Michael Keating, Professor at University of Aberdeen

Ms Ilze Brands Kehris, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, UN

Moderator: **Ms Kristina Háfoss**, Secretary General, Nordic Council

- 16.10 – 16.30** **Closure of the Conference**
Concluding remarks
Mr Bertel Haarder, President of the Nordic Council

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BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE CONFERENCE

Background

The Nordic countries have a long common history and a partly common culture. The Nordic states Denmark, Norway and Sweden constitute some of the world's oldest state formations. During the period after the Second World War the Nordic political co-operation developed. The countries began to cooperate more and more while the democratic structures developed further. The autonomy of the Åland islands, based on international law, celebrates 100 years during the years 2021 - 2022.

In 1952, the Nordic Council was founded with the aim of increasing co-operation in the Nordic countries on cultural, political, legal and social issues.

The Faroe Islands and Åland joined the Nordic Council in 1970 and Greenland joined in 1984. The history of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland differs in many ways, which is also reflected in how they are governed and in their interaction with others. The Nordic Council of Ministers was established in 1971.

The Faroe Islands, Åland and Greenland are today both a natural and self-evident and contributing part of the Nordic family. The inclusion of the Faroe Islands, Åland and Greenland in Nordic co-operation has become something that the Nordic countries can jointly highlight as a success concept as a counterpoint to the political instability and polarization.

Conference on Nordic co-operation as an example of sustainable democracy

During the Finnish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, which will be held in co-operation with the Åland government, a conference will be held aimed at diplomats, politicians, and international organizations both in and outside the Nordic region. The purpose is to present the strong democratic systems in the Nordic region, including the way in which the Faroe Islands, Åland and Greenland participate in Nordic co-operation and how their participation increases sustainable democracy in the Nordic region. A sustainable democracy that counteracts conflicts between areas and regions as well as between countries. In line with the vision adopted by the Nordic Prime Ministers, which states that the Nordic region will be the world's most sustainable and integrated region by 2030, it is also interesting to show how the democratic systems in the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland can be examples of and even forerunners of social and environmental sustainability.

The conference will be held in Copenhagen on the 8th of December 2021. The conference is intended to be streamed and documented.

