

Below and on the following page are descriptions of the work of **The Nordic Council** and **The Nordic Council of Ministers**, which fosters co-operation between Denmark and its autonomous territories of the Faeroes and Greenland, Finland and its autonomous Åland Islands, Iceland, Norway and Sweden - with a total population of around 23 million. The extracts are taken from the publication *Nordic Co-operation*, published jointly by both Councils (further information from: The Nordic Council, Secretariat of the Presidium, Tyrgatan 7, Box 19506, S-10432 Stockholm, Sweden - Tel: 46-(0)8-143420). The eight-winged swan symbolises co-operation between the five Nordic countries and the three autonomous territories.

The Nordic Council

The Nordic Council is a vehicle of co-operation between the parliaments and governments of the Nordic countries.

The Council was set up in 1952 by Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Finland joined in 1955, and since 1970 the autonomous territories of the Faeroes and the Åland Islands have had their own representatives on the Council. Since 1984 Greenland has also been represented. Co-operation was first regulated by a Statute, and is now governed by the 1962 Helsinki Treaty.

The Council initiates, encourages, and follows up the results of Nordic co-operation by issuing recommendations and statements of opinion to the Nordic Council of Ministers and to governments. Recommendations are expressions of political will with a basis in national parliaments. In most cases they result in action by governments or the Council of Ministers.

Annual session

Each year the members of the Nordic Council meet for a week-long session, held in the various Nordic capitals in turn. After an opening general debate, proposals submitted by members of the Council, the Council of Ministers, and governments are considered. The Council also monitors how past recommendations have been implemented and how Nordic institutions are operating. Questions are put to the Council of Ministers and individual governments.

The Nordic Council has 87 members, elected by the legislatures of the Nordic countries and autonomous territories. A country's elected members, alternate members, and government representatives make up its delegation. The Faeroese and Greenland delegations are part of Denmark's delegation

and that of the Åland Islands is included in the Finnish delegation.

Six committees

Members of the Council are assigned to one of six standing committees: the Economic, Legal, Environmental, Cultural, Social and Budget Committees. The first five prepare the business to be considered during the session of the Council. The Budget Committee co-ordinates consideration by the other committees of the Council of Ministers' budget proposals and supervises activities funded by the Council of Ministers.

Between sessions, the day-to-day work of the Nordic Council is directed by a Presidium consisting of eleven parliamentarians, ten full members and one observer. The Presidium has a joint Nordic Secretariat in Stockholm. Each delegation has a secretariat of its own at its national parliament.

The Council's business is conducted in Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish. At the sessions simultaneous interpretation from and into Finnish is provided.

THE NORDIC COUNCIL		Number of members
Denmark	Folketing	16
Faeroes	Lagting	2
Greenland	Landsting	2
Finland	Eduskunta/ Riksdag	18
Åland Islands	Landsting	2
Iceland	Alting	7
Norway	Storting	20
Sweden	Riksdag	20
		<u>87</u>



The Nordic Council of Ministers

The Nordic Council of Ministers, founded in 1971, is a body for co-operation between the governments of the Nordic countries. The executive bodies of the Faeroes, Greenland, and the Åland Islands also take part in its work. The Council of Ministers submits proposals to sessions of the Nordic Council, follows up its recommendations, reports to the Council on the results of co-operation, and directs Nordic co-operation in various sectors.

Each government appoints one of its members as minister for Nordic co-operation. These ministers are responsible for co-ordinating questions concerning Nordic co-operation between governments and for Nordic affairs within their own governments. Each of them has a specially appointed civil servant as his or her deputy.

The Council of Ministers consists either of the co-operation ministers or ministers responsible for particular sectors, who meet in various constellations depending on the matters to be considered. Unanimous decisions by the Council of Ministers are binding on governments. However, in some cases national legislation makes its decisions subject to parliamentary approval. Decisions affecting matters in the jurisdiction of the autonomous territories are binding on the Faeroes, Greenland, and the Åland Islands if approved by them.

The prime ministers, foreign ministers, and defence ministers hold regular meetings, but not as the Council of Ministers.

The groundwork on matters relating to Nordic co-operation is done by the Council of Ministers' joint Nordic Secretariat in Copenhagen and by some 15 senior officials' committees. The Secretariat deals with questions

concerning fiscal and foreign exchange policy, industry and energy, construction, trade and development assistance, employment and the working environment, social policy, environment, regional policy, communications and road safety, tourism, agriculture and forestry, consumer policy, equal opportunities, general culture and media co-operation, and research and education.

To deal with concrete co-operation questions there are some 60 joint institutions and permanent committees, funded via a joint Nordic budget.

FUNDING NORDIC CO-OPERATION

The Nordic countries contribute to Nordic co-operation according to a scale of assessments, based on each country's share of total Nordic gross national product.

The Nordic Council of Ministers' 1991 budget totals Dkr 698 m.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NORDIC BUDGET IN 1991:

<i>Denmark</i>	21.3%
<i>Finland</i>	21.2%
<i>Iceland</i>	1.1%
<i>Norway</i>	18.9%
<i>Sweden</i>	37.5%