

# **The Nordic cross-border cooperation**

The Freedom of Movement Council

# The Nordic Region



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The Nordic Council of  
Ministers The Nordic  
Council

The five countries

Denmark, Norway, Sweden,  
Finland, Iceland

The three autonomous  
territories

The Faroe Islands, Greenland  
and Åland



# The Nordic Region



**26 million**  
citizens



**2,3 million**  
businesses



**12,5 million**  
employees



**8800 billion**  
GDP

# The Nordic Region



**5. largest**  
economy in Europe



**11. largest**  
economy in the world

# The Nordic Region



The world's most  
peaceful region



The world's most  
democratic region



The world's second  
happiest population

# The Nordic Region



**Nr. 1**  
in Winter Olympics



**Nr. 2**  
in Summer Olympics



**6 Eurovision victories**  
since 2000

## Labour and movement in the Nordic Region

70.000 cross-border commuters.

58.000 moved in 2011 to another  
Nordic country.



## Nordic Council of Ministers

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The Nordic Council of Ministers is the official body for Nordic intergovernmental co-operation.

- The Prime ministers have the overall responsibility, and delegate it to the Ministers of Nordic Cooperation
- There are 10 councils, each concentrating on a specific subject
- The appropriate ministers meet a couple of times a year
- All decisions must be adopted unanimously
- Supported by Committees of Senior Officials and number of working Groups
  - The Freedom of Movement Council





# A long journey, with many millstones

- Nordic Council (1952)
- Passport Union (1957)
- Helsinki Treaty (1962)
- Nordic Council of Ministers (1971)
- Agreement on a fully integrated labour market (1982)
- Nordic Language Convention (1987)
- The Swan Label (1989)
- Free access to higher education (1996)



## The Freedom of Movement Council was established 2014 on the initiative of the Nordic Prime Ministers.



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The Nordic Council of Ministers



### Political statements

"We, the prime ministers of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, the lagmand of the Faroe Islands, the landsstyreformand of Greenland and the lantråd of Åland agree that **the promotion of freedom of movement in order to create jobs and growth in the Nordic countries is one of the key challenges faced by Nordic co-operation.**"

*- Declaration by the Nordic prime ministers on the work against border barriers, 29 October 2013 (non-official translation)*

# Information and elimination of border obstacles

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In order to facilitate freedom of movement in the Nordic Region for individuals as well as businesses, The Nordic Council of Ministers is investing in information and elimination of border obstacles.

Focus on three main areas:

- Break down existing border obstacles
- Prevent new border obstacles to occur
- Enhance and improve information efforts



# The Freedom of Movement Council (2014–)



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The Nordic Council of Ministers

## Members:

*An unique composition of individuals with firm political, professional and administrative backgrounds.*

- The Nordic countries, Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland
- The Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers.
- Representative from the Nordic Council

## Meetings:

- One annual kickoff meeting.
- Four operational meetings.



Kickoff-meeting, Snekersten (DK), 18-19 February 2014

**Image credit: Christiaan Dirksen**

# The Freedom of Movement Council (2014–)



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Focus on labour market, social welfare and education

Each national member **prioritizes** 3–5 barriers

Solve 5–10 barriers in total/year through agreements or changes in legislation



# Cooperation on regional-, national- and Nordic level



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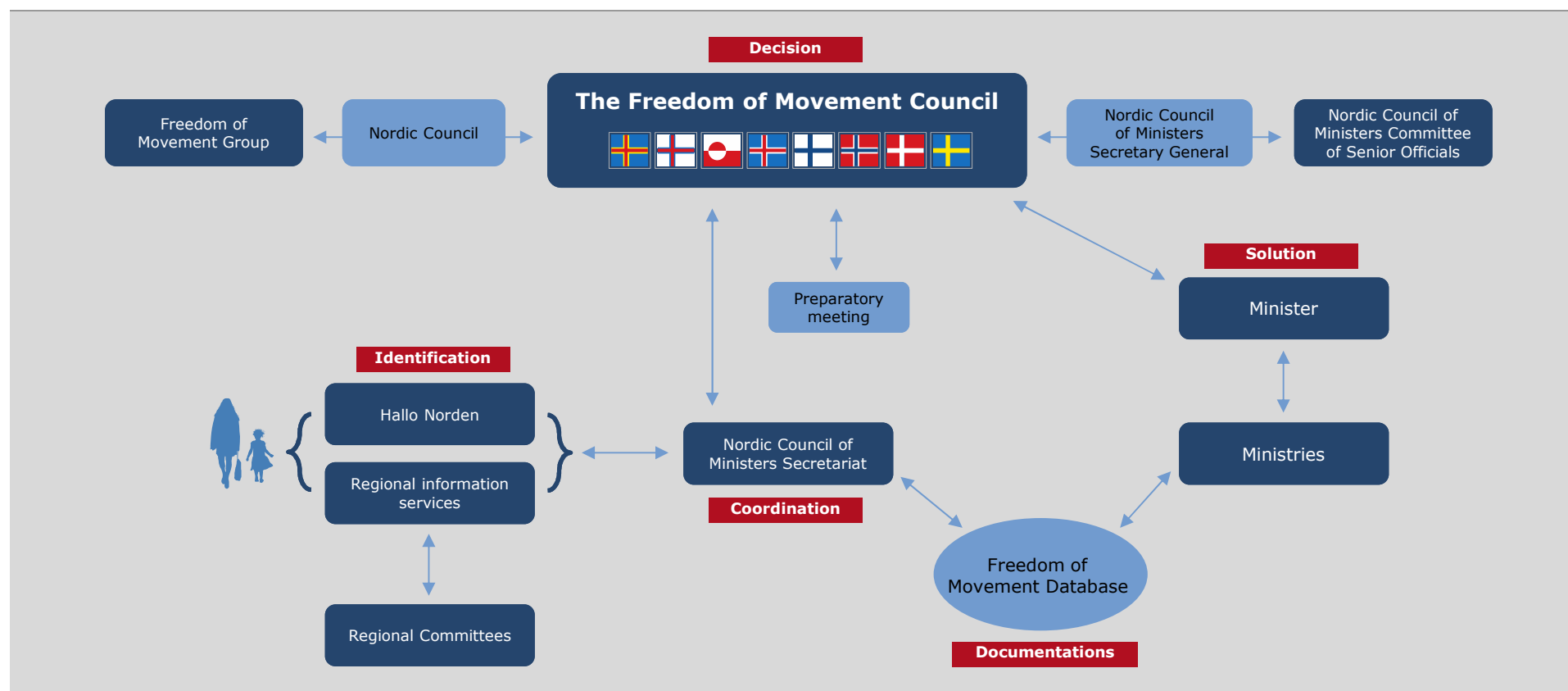
Nordic Council of Ministers  
Nordic Council

The Freedom of Movement Council cooperates with:

1. Regional information services and committees.
2. National stakeholders and the effort is linked to the operational level in the countries.
3. Nordic Council of Ministers
  1. for Labour (MR-A)
  2. for Health and Social Affairs (MR-S)
  3. for Finance (MR-FINANS)
  4. for Education and Research (MR-U)
  5. for Business, Energy & Regional Policy (MR-NER)



# The Freedom of Movement Council



# The Freedom of movement council annual report

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# Administrative approach

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Discussion topic:

What are the factors for success of this cooperation?

To what extent does the annual report contribute?





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The Nordic Council of Ministers

# Working Methods

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- External reports
  - Ex. Tax, professional qualifications directive
- Roundtable discussions
  - Ex. ID-cards
- Smaller “task forces”
  - Ex. Leave for local politicians
- Challenge: Getting statistics/numbers
- Professional network



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- Declaration by the Nordic prime ministers on the work against border barriers, 29 October 2013 (non-official translation)

"One of the key challenges faced by Nordic co-operation is to create the best possible conditions for people and companies to move freely between the countries. **We will intensify our efforts, e.g. ensuring that new national legislation and the way in which the Nordic countries implement EU legislation do not create new barriers to freedom of movement in the Region.**"

- Vision for Nordic co-operation, 6 February 2014 (MR-SAM)

**"The new Freedom of Movement Council has a unique composition of individuals with firm political, professional and administrative backgrounds.** It is my strong belief that we will be able to solve border barriers together with those who make national laws and rules. A borderless Nordic region where citizens are treated as equally as possible and are able to move freely over country borders has always been one of the fundamental ideas of the Nordic co-operation."

- Dagfinn Høybråten, Secretary General (non-official translation)