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**STRATEGY FOR COOPERATION AND PEACE IN THE ARCTIC:
NORDEN MUST LEAD
Presented by Föreningarna Nordens Förbund (FNF)**

In the Cold War strategic issues were excluded from Nordic cooperation. But it is more than two decades since the Berlin Wall fell. Good security today is about a whole range of issues like economic, environmental, and health security and emergency handling, where Europe's North has shared interests and can best protect them by positive cooperation. In April 2011 Nordic Ministers made a historic pledge to come to each others' aid in all emergencies outside actual war.

If this new Nordic 'solidarity' means anything, it must include debating future challenges to the stability of our region - and finding common strategies to handle them in peace and cooperation. The largest single source of uncertainty now facing Norden's common security is the opening up of the Arctic space through climate change. If well handled, it could bring great rewards from sustainable development. But it also means new risks of accidents and pollution, new stresses on local societies, and possibly dangerous international competition over territories and resources.

The new Arctic dynamics could still go many ways. Norden cannot hope to protect its own interests by staying out of the debate. Nor can these five small or medium states hope for much impact unless they work together. So far, Nordic States' national strategies for the Arctic have common themes but quite varied language and priorities. Norway and Denmark stress the need to protect their territories (including Greenland) and their further claims in the polar seas. Iceland calls for recognition as an Arctic 'littoral' state. Finland calls for stronger EU involvement in the Arctic, while Sweden stresses the environment and human values.

These five are not the only democracies in our region with interests at stake. The Baltic States are wondering how the Arctic factor will affect Russia's future behaviour, and whether international attention will shift away from the Baltic Sea's own problems. Greenland and the Faroes are already affected by oil and gas exploration, and their home-rule authorities are starting to think harder about their specific interests in Arctic scenarios.

No single institution lets all these governments consult privately on Arctic affairs. The Baltic States are not in the Arctic Council, or the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. Norway and Denmark alone are invited to meetings of an inner group of five Arctic powers with Canada, Russia and the USA. In practice, the key issues of territory, peace and economic development will be decided through more diverse and informal channels where big powers and big business will set the pace.

In face of these challenges to our shared interests and values, and perhaps to the region's peace:

Nordic strategy for the Arctic must be common – to avoid confusion or actual conflicts of interest among the five states, and to build solidarity in support of

common Nordic interests and values: peace, sustainable development, justice and protection for the weaker players.

Nordic strategy for the Arctic must be inclusive – to bring in the Baltic States and the Faroes and Greenland authorities, creating a broader common front that will have more impact on other powers and will bring maximum added value, both in policy debates and practical cooperation.

Nordic strategy for the Arctic must be open and democratic – formed and discussed through representative institutions, giving a voice to medborger-organisationer like FNF and all other concerned elements in society.

Norden cannot solve this challenge alone but it is the right place to start. The steps are clear:

- **Seek the common elements in Nordic national strategies and agree as many common priorities as possible.** So far, the Nordic Ministers' programmes on Arctic cooperation have encouraged specific, lower level activities and research networks. This is valuable but should not be an excuse for ignoring the political and strategic aspects. We need an effort for high-level consensus and compromise on the big questions as well.
- **Bring in the Baltic States and the Faroes and Greenland authorities as part of a broader common front** that includes their specific interests and expertise.
- **Debate and consult** with all interested elements in society.
- **Promote the new inclusive Northern strategy** in all existing institutions, diplomatic processes and business channels where Arctic business is now handled
- Consider whether **any new structures or network arrangements** are needed to keep the partners in this inclusive strategy in regular contact, to develop the strategy further, and to promote our region's shared interests through the many complex processes that will decide the future of the Arctic region in the medium and longer term.

Föreningarna Nordens Forbund calls on the Nordic Council to present these five recommendations to the Nordic Council of Ministers, and on national delegations to pursue them with their individual governments as a matter of urgency.

OR:

Föreningarna Nordens Forbund calls on the Nordic Council of Ministers to take note of this analysis; to pursue the five recommendations above, and to keep the Nordic Council informed of the results on a regular basis.

På vegne af FNFs præsidium

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