Critical Nordic Flows

Collaboration between Finland, Norway and Sweden on Security of Supply and Critical Infrastructure Protection
Commissioned by the Finnish National Emergency Supply Agency; the Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries; and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency.

Research input provided by the Finnish National Emergency Supply Agency; the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment; and the Swedish Defence Research Agency.

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Executive summary

In October 2017, a tripartite seminar held in Helsinki concluded that there appear to be sound justifications for continuing and, as appropriate, deepening cooperation between Finland, Norway and Sweden on the themes of security of supply and critical infrastructure protection. This report provides an initial response to the seminar diagnosis by exploring the ways in which Finland, Norway and Sweden could deepen their trilateral cooperation to prepare for potential disruptions to cross-border flows of critical goods and services.

The six societal sectors addressed in this report are communications and digital networks, energy, food, financial infrastructure, pharmaceuticals, and transport. The findings are based on an analysis of publicly available documents and over 60 interviews with public and private sector experts across Finland, Norway and Sweden. The report does not provide an exhaustive overview. Instead, it aims to facilitate further research and joint projects by providing a bird’s eye view of the key cooperation arrangements in which the three countries are currently involved.

This report identifies several opportunities for further trilateral collaboration. Finland, Norway and Sweden share similar challenges in protecting vital digital solutions and services, and the supply of essential pharmaceuticals. In other areas, the countries’ emphases and starting points vary. Despite their differing energy mixes, a shift towards new energy sources and systems calls for coordinated efforts to ensure energy security across the three countries. In terms of transport, Finland and Sweden are more exposed than Norway to disruptions to vital cross-border cargo flows in the Baltic Sea, while in securing payment systems, Finland’s reliance on European infrastructure distinguishes the country from its western neighbours. In ensuring food security, the three countries have largely relied on their own, national measures.

In working together to address cross-border dependencies, the countries could benefit from pursuing cross-sectoral combinations of measures. To help develop new associations, this report categorises measures into four types: joint research, platform revision, regulatory harmonisation, and cross-border policy coherence. The countries could also strive towards a shared understanding of the levels of international collaboration on which specific challenges are best tackled. In some cases, the three countries may find it useful to develop their existing bilateral arrangements and agreements on a bilateral or trilateral basis, whereas some challenges are better tackled by pursuing joint measures with the Nordic and the Baltic countries. Yet on other issues trilateral collaboration could involve agreeing on the themes to be pursued at EU and NATO level, two major institutions to which the countries are varyingly affiliated.

By compiling a total of 28 provisional themes for further cooperation, the final report serves as a discussion paper for policy-makers and experts. Throughout, it points towards cross-sectoral thinking as a key to deeper collaboration between Finland, Norway and Sweden in the security of supply and critical infrastructure protection. While in individual areas, the countries’ perceived interests sometimes differ, combining initiatives, projects and agreements across borders, as well as involving companies and other societal stakeholders in the process, can result in new arrangements that benefit all parties. The countries’ ties are traditionally deep and barriers to cooperation low. As long as the right policy combinations are found, trilateral cooperation can serve as a vital component in their preparedness efforts.
Context

In October 2017, a tripartite seminar held in Helsinki concluded that there appear to be sound justifications for continuing and, as appropriate, deepening trilateral cooperation between Finland, Norway, and Sweden on the themes of security of supply and critical infrastructure protection. One of the operational conclusions reached was that the cooperation between the countries could benefit from strengthening of the common information base through a mapping and analysis of cross-border interdependencies and of flows of strategic goods and products in the Nordic region.

This report provides an initial response to the seminar diagnosis. Commissioned by three public agencies, the Finnish National Emergency Supply Agency (NESA), the Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries (NFD), and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), it explores the extent to which the cooperation arrangements in place between Finland, Norway, and Sweden help the countries prepare for potential disruptions in cross-border flows of critical goods and services. The research was led by a project manager based at the NESA, and conducted together with experts at the commissioning agencies and researchers from two institutes: the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) and the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI). The project was designed to provide a bird’s eye view of the diverse cooperation arrangements and critical flows in which the three countries are involved, and to serve as a starting point for further, trilateral research projects and concrete collaborative arrangements.

This report is not the first endeavour to identify the issues, trends and processes in the shifting international landscape to which these Nordic countries could find it beneficial to respond together. The need for an enhanced collective understanding of countries’ shared flows and dependencies has long been recognised. However, the changing geopolitical environment, hybrid and cyber threats, the globalisation of supply chains, and climate change, are just some of the factors creating a need for higher situational awareness. The civilian elements of national preparedness efforts, on which this report focuses, are significantly affected by such changes. They have motivated Finland, Norway, and Sweden to reassess the instances in which the three countries could best prevent and mitigate potential disruptions to critical societal functions by acting together.

Design

This report aims to help the reader understand how Finland, Norway, and Sweden can utilise the symmetries and asymmetries between their dependencies on international flows of goods, products and services to collectively strengthen their security of supply and critical infrastructure protection. To do so, it compiles i) existing forms of cooperation between the countries, ii) flows and dependencies between and shared by them, and iii) opportunities for further cooperation through which the countries could better thrive amidst the increasing and deepening connections transcending national boundaries. The six societal sectors addressed in this final report parallel the institutional tasks of the three commissioning agencies, which set the initial limits for the exploration work. As the research progressed, the researchers focused on those themes in each sector, which had been diagnosed in collective meetings as showing the most potential for trilateral cooperation.

The data was compiled by a research group consisting of Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish research-
ers working in and for the commissioning agencies between March 2019 and January 2020 in each country. The first element of the data-gathering was document research, as the researchers amassed existing literature, reports and articles available in their respective countries. The second element was to conduct over 60 interviews with public and private sector experts. While the guides for semi-structured interviews were agreed on beforehand, the interviews were conducted at different times and by different researchers in each country, with the majority in Finland. Through internal seminars and correspondence, the research team discussed and complemented the data-gathering to generate information conducive to a joint analysis. The country-specific sections in this report remain somewhat independent wholes, highlighting those aspects that emanated from country-specific research.

The aim of interviewing public sector experts, whose work involves security of supply and critical infrastructures, was to draw on their informed views on the current state of official cooperation, on their sense for potential trends affecting prospects for further cooperation, and on their ideas as regarding future cooperation schemes, without them representing the official views of their employers. The experts were also asked to identify companies important for their country’s preparedness efforts, and which they deemed as potentially relevant for the project. Companies play a substantial role in maintaining critical societal functions in the Nordic countries; an important part of national preparedness efforts is to ensure that they can continue their operations even during shortages, disruptions and other challenges. The aim of interviewing private sector experts in companies and industry associations was to draw directly on their continuity management, supply risk analysis and contingency planning efforts to help identify the kinds of flows and dependencies potentially important to preparedness cooperation between Finland, Norway and Sweden.

As inevitable in all policy-driven research, the process of analysing the data involves a subjective element: interviewees’ interests flow into the views they posit, and researchers interpret new information based on their previous dispositions. Iterative writing and wide comment rounds were utilised to ensure that the research process remained transparent and balanced. Besides online correspondence and facilitative meetings, the research team met several times to discuss the interim findings. The full draft was subjected to a review by public sector experts in each country between December 2019 and January 2020. The research team conducted iterative writing before, during and after the comment rounds to accommodate and balance the many perspectives. By themselves, the comment rounds served to further cross-border collaboration, enabling the national experts to engage with each other’s views and the research team to nuance the analysis.

The research design is widely defined as exploratory, as it aims to ‘generate new ideas and weave them together to form grounded theory, or theory that emerges directly from data’. In social sciences, exploratory design has been most conventionally applied in sociological research, but has over time found new forms in other disciplines. The exploratory design is useful in situations in which gaps in current knowledge are not precisely identified and there is a need to take stock of the current body of knowledge in order to find its limits. Such research is usually carried out in the early stages of a research programme to help tease out more specific hypotheses, to ‘find rather than ‘resolve’, problems, that is, to identify new areas subsequent research may pore into over tailored tools. Serendipities, or fortunate discoveries, are a potential product of such a research format, which, in the context of this report, may materialize as new perspectives on trilateral cooperation and an updated perspective on its current status.

The exploratory approach does not strive to exhaust the topic, and stones left untorn have been duly noted during the research process. Some important sectors, such as those related to military material, rescue services, governmental communications and critical raw materials, were excluded from the onset. The research inevitably involved leaving out some potential areas in order to compile enough information on the ones included, whereby potential venues for cooperation have gone unregistered. Furthermore, in order to retain the confidentiality of the companies’ business arrangements and the states’ preparedness efforts, the report avoids sector-specific details. The Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish authorities have the opportunity to use the material accrued to prepare versions for limited use. Steps for further research are also flagged. One direction for a follow-up would be to involve other countries, in particular Denmark, Iceland and the Baltic states, to generate new insights on regional cooperation.

These caveats aside, the report aims to provide a useful lens for policy-makers and experts in Finland, Norway and Sweden to evaluate the potential policy trajectories by compiling, curating and evaluating knowledge on civilian preparedness efforts currently scattered across various public and private actors. The research supports evidence-based policy-making in two ways. First, investigations on security of supply are often conducted by and for individual countries. This report builds on a collaborative analysis by public agencies and research institutions in three Nordic states. Second, investigations often focus on one sector at a time, such as agriculture or logistics. By addressing several sectors, the report creates some initial space for new associations across them, thus serving the need for a cross-sectoral perspective that policy-makers and analysts have identified. 2

Concepts

For sale of the report, in this report the concept of the ‘Nordic’ encompasses Finland, Norway and Sweden, unless otherwise indicated as referring to Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden and their respective territories. Four concepts central to the report require further elaboration. First, whereas in a continental context security of supply is under-

stood as the availability of a given product, function or service, in this report the concept refers broadly to the policy area to:

- ensure the continuity of production and infrastructure vital to society under all circumstances in such a way that the living conditions of the population and the critical functions of society are secured also in the event of disruptions and emergencies, including a state of defence.

The scope of this formulation is wide, resonating with various themes in the Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish concept in which the authorities, businesses, organizations and citizens work together in safeguarding the vital functions of society against a wide range of challenges, such as natural hazards, pandemics and shortages. In Sweden, security of supply is a fundamental part both of society’s crisis preparedness and the nation’s civil defence planning. The Swedish concept of total defence includes preparations and planning carried out by civil and military defence in order to prepare Sweden for heightened alert and war. All government authorities are responsible for ensuring the functioning of the activities in their own field under heightened preparedness in cooperation with all relevant actors, such as national authorities, municipalities, county councils, associations, and private businesses. In Norway, security of supply also overlaps with the concept of total defence. The Norwegian concept emphasises the importance of mutual support and shared responsibility of forces and civil society in addressing public security as well as civil protection. As NATO membership is a key element of Norwegian security and defence policy, many functions related to security of supply take

9 Critical Nordic Flows introduction

8 Critical Nordic Flows introduction


7 NESA (2019a): Objectives.


9 Security Committee (2017): The security strategy for society.


place in cooperation with the Allied nations.13

Second, the report discusses critical infrastructure, which as per the European Union Directive refers to an asset, system or part thereof located in Member States which is essential for the maintenance of vital societal functions, health, safety, security, economic or social well-being of people, and the disruption or destruction of which would have a significant impact in a Member State as a result of the failure to maintain those functions.14

The EU and the OECD have stepped up measures to identify such critical infrastructure elements and enhance prevention, preparedness and consequence management measures in relation to them.15 Inter-governmental work has been recognised as crucial, because much of the nationally important infrastructure, such as maritime cables, pharmaceutical factories and data centres, often lie beyond national boundaries.16 Accordingly, and third, the report refers to critical flows to highlight the international nature of such critical infrastructure in modern Nordic societies. The concept of flows helps conceptualise phenomena of social and political importance without holding state boundaries as a fixed limit to the analysis. The paradigm of ‘flow security’ has been invoked alongside more conventional ‘territorial’ security to recognise that political, economic and societal functions nationally identified as critical stretch across borders.17 Critical global flows are ‘transboundary arteries that constitute the essence of open societies, daily communications and the global economy’, and they have different character-
istics, which in turn give birth to dependencies.18

Fourth, critical flows imply dependencies between states, companies, non-governmental organisations and individuals.19 Asymmetrical interdependencies in the security of supply and critical infrastructure have security implications: while they can be mutually beneficial, governments still usually treat them as vulnerabilities to be mitigated, as they allow other actors to take advantage of new disruptive practices and sources of power.20 Gaining a better understanding of the current dependencies between and shared by the Nordic countries is a step towards ensuring that crucial connections are hard to exploit, disrupt or sever, either by intention, by accident, or by chance.

Structure

This report has six sectoral chapters. First, each presents, country by country, sectoral characteristics highlighted during the research process, and the main arrangements the countries have in place to prevent and mitigate any potential disruptions to important societal functions. The country-specific sections do not cover identical issues. Each chapter then discusses the current state of and the prospects for further cooperation. The provisional suggestions compiled at the end of each chapter illustrate the diversity of measures that the three countries may choose to develop rather than form the main thrust of this report. Here, references to interviews indicate the themes addressed rather than direct proposals or views articulated by interviewees. The themes provide raw material for policy-makers and sectoral experts to make use of when thinking about the next steps.

The conclusive chapter draws together three perspectives for orienting those steps. Throughout, this report underscores the compiling of cross-sectoral packages as a key to transcending the countries’ sometimes diverging emphases and interests.
packages as a key to transcending the countries’ sometimes diverging emphases and interests. One useful angle for further collaboration is to try identify the sectors in which the countries have similar aspirations, and to search across the sectors if such areas are hard to find. This report highlights the countries’ shared challenges in ensuring the supply of essential pharmaceuticals, and in responding to novel threats faced by highly digitalised societies. Maintaining the countries’ energy security amidst a shift towards new energy sources and systems, protecting vital cross-border cargo flows, and monitoring the functioning of the financial infrastructures, are also venues for potential collaboration, as long as the arrangements can accommodate the countries’ somewhat diverging priorities and starting points. Furthermore, although the countries have largely relied on independent measures, they could potentially improve the exchange of best practices and formalise some of the current cooperative arrangements to ensure food security.

Another approach to complement attempts to deepen cooperation in individual sectors is to pursue similar types of measures across them. Several suggestions included to this report bear similarities to each other, and here they are divided into four groups. One group consists of joint studies and explorations, which can deepen the general level of analysis in this report. Another group includes ways to harness or strengthen existing collaborative platforms, as well as to create completely new ones. A third group constitutes measures to harmonise the regulatory environment in order to ease the sharing and trade of vital goods and other resources during disruptions. And a fourth group involves more wide-ranging calls for policy coherence across the borders to ensure that national strategies in different societal sectors reflect the security of supply and critical infrastructure protection needs across the three countries.

A third angle to rethinking trilateral cooperation is to work together to consider the ways different levels of international collaboration can be best used to address commonly recognised issues. Currently, Finland, Norway and Sweden have bilateral, although varyingly active agreements on economic co-operation with each other to ensure that the countries provide each other with vital goods and materials during international crises. Some challenges involved with cross-border flows and dependencies may be tackled if such arrangements are revamped on a bilateral or trilateral basis. However, other issues are rooted in phenomena beyond the joint means of the three countries, and other states also may have an interest in addressing them. In these cases, a regional approach involving the five Nordic countries and the Baltic countries may yield an effective response. Other phenomena are such in nature that the most important form of trilateral cooperation may be to pursue commonly agreed action points in the EU and the NATO. Finland is an EU Member State using the common currency of the euro. Sweden is an EU, though non-euro Member State. Norway is not an EU Member State, but a close collaborator through the EEA agreement. Norway is a member of NATO, whereas Finland and Sweden have looser ties to NATO through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). These differing affiliations can be used to pursue a shared agenda on international fronts.

Through its exploratory approach, and by bringing some organisational clarity to the manifold collaborative arrangements Finland, Norway and Sweden currently have, this report aims to start the discussion on the potential next steps. Cross-sectoral thinking is a key to deeper collaboration between the three countries in the security of supply and critical infrastructure protection. While in individual sectors, the countries’ perceived interests sometimes differ, wrapping together initiatives, projects and agreements across the sectors, while involving companies and other societally important stakeholders in the process, can result in new arrangements that benefit all parties.

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Finland is a thoroughly digitalised society: alongside the other four Nordic countries, it tops the rankings in the connectivity speeds and mobile data usage, and in the general capability of the private and public sector to take advantage of big data and other digital assets. This section centres on its key cross-border communications infrastructure, both physical and digital, emphasising cyber security as a rising theme.

The backbone of the Finnish communications networks lies in the Baltic Sea: data and phone calls between Finland and the rest of the world are channelled abroad primarily through submarine optic fibre cables (figure 1). The submarine cables link Finland through Estonia, Sweden and Germany to major data hubs in continental Europe, such as Amsterdam, Frankfurt and London. While Finnish private and public actors also make use of satellites to transmit information and to provide positioning services, satellite connections are not enough to carry the information flows channelled through submarine cables.

Telecommunications companies make use of the submarine cables to provide Finnish companies, organisations and individuals with connectivity services. Together, Elisa, DNA and Telia control a significant share of the markets, facilitating 4G coverage throughout the country. Two of the companies are characteristically Nordic: Telia is a major provider of mobile, broadband, fixed voice and TV services in Finland, Sweden and Norway and is partly owned by the Swedish state, whereas DNA is wholly owned by Telenor, a Norwegian state-owned telecoms company. The companies have built nation-wide and competing, although partially overlapping, communication networks. The Finnish private sector has strong expertise in building the necessary infrastructure, for instance due to Nokia’s strong presence in network equipment manufacturing.

Finland, Norway and Sweden are global forerunners in adopting new digital services. While digitalisation is an invaluable social asset in many ways, the process also creates new dependencies in everyday functions pivotal to governments, companies and individuals. Digitalisation makes many critical assets increasingly reliant on information flows across national borders. New technologies, such as cloud-based services and 5G networks, require specialised software and expertise often located or originating from abroad. As power plants, health centres and other societally important facilities become more integrated in digital networks, they can become exposed to new cyber threats. This section discusses some of the challenges Finland, Norway and Sweden share as they spearhead the global trend of digitalisation.

23 Interview at a telecommunications provider, Finland, 14 August.
Digital services, which widely encompass elements such as operating systems, corporate and public data management systems, and cyber security services, constitute another, equally crucial element in the Finnish digital infrastructure. In terms of market share, the major providers of IT software and services in Finland are Tieto and CGI, followed by a number of smaller actors. The two companies operate across the Nordic countries: CGI has a strong presence in Sweden, and Tieto is merging with Evry, a Norwegian IT service-provider, thus creating a major Nordic IT house that controls significant market shares across all three countries.

The digital infrastructure operated by these and other agents is characteristically cross-border. Cloud services penetrating more and more organisational structures often run on a globally or Europe-wide scattered infrastructure; data centres that the internal systems the Finnish subsidiaries of multi-national companies use can be located abroad; and staff units vital to running companies’ digital services might be outsourced beyond Finland or Europe. Increasingly, key elements of the digital infrastructure are outside Finland, and no market indications exist that they might migrate to Finland in the foreseeable future.

The Finnish national risk assessment 2018 identifies a wide range of challenges faced by digitalised Finnish society, noting that the potential for disruptions in communications services and networks is on the increase. The reliance of digitalised Finnish society on a network of maritime cables has long been considered in contingency planning. The more unconventional scenarios include problems in satellite communications or radio frequencies caused by geomagnetic storms or malicious interference; challenges in global infrastructures and foreign content delivery networks; and cyber-attacks and cybercrime leading to a paralysis that spreads across critical digital services.

The National Cyber Security Centre, the Security Committee, and the NESA are among the public actors in Finland facilitating a better understanding of and means to mitigate risks in a digitalising society. Some measures are well established: for instance, much of the physical communications infrastructure located in Finland is recognised as a critical element in national preparedness efforts. Planning involves cooperation with telecommunications and major IT providers, whose clients include major companies and public organisations. Officials have also established separate communications networks for emergency use. However, keeping up with the rapidly evolving digital environment requires continued efforts: for instance, the 2019 Digital Strategy by the Security Committee announces the launch of a national cyber security development programme.

While Finland benefits considerably from its cross-border digital infrastructure, new measures are being taken to ensure that society can manage the risks involved. Cyber-attacks, fraud attempts and contagious computer viruses both in Finland and abroad have highlighted the need for more elaborate cyber capabilities. The building of new perimeters is taking place, although the degree to which ICT security efforts are implemented in the public and private sector varies. The criteria for what constitutes a viable cyber defence are still relatively unharmonised, whilst at the same time cyber threats are growing more diverse and sophisticated. Knowledge of different solutions remains spread out among companies, organisations and individual experts, although several Finnish companies providing cyber security services have strong expertise in the field.
This sector is characterised by long and complex supply chains, comprising of service operators and suppliers ranging from the small and local to the large and international. Gaining a coherent overview of the entire sector is therefore rather difficult, not least also because it is a sector constantly changing with the advent of new technologies. Nevertheless, a general understanding can be achieved by looking at the electronic communications infrastructure and services.

The infrastructure and production of services is entirely commercially based. There are three core national telecommunications networks in Norway, owned by TeliaSonera, Global Connect (previously Broadnet) and Altibox. TeliaSonera’s largest shareholder is the Norwegian state. Global Connect and Altibox’s core networks rely to some degree on its infrastructure, and the company has the most developed network with a 51 per cent market share in 2017. A series of other networks exist along transportation and energy axes, usually developed to maintain preparedness and robustness in those organisations.40 In addition to this, smaller commercial enterprises own and maintain regional and local networks, and rent core network access from the core providers.41 Foreign telecommunication providers operate in the Norwegian market, such as Telia, the Swedish telecommunications provider. Where Nkom monitors with broad oversight, commercial enterprises control the networks.42 Other agencies, such as the Norwegian National Security Authority (NSM), also work in the sector with regards to the security aspect, especially through its administration of the National Cyber Security Centre (NCCS) and the Norwegian Computer Emergency Response Team (NecERT) operating under it.

Regarding preparedness measures, there is very little incentive for the Norwegian providers of communications infrastructure to act outside of a commercial interest. The supply of and through such infrastructures is controlled by commercial concerns and corporate deal making: when capacities are reached or surpassed, the decision to expand the service and thereby the supply comes down to a commercial cost-benefit analysis.43 However, some arrangements are in place. For instance, the Electronic Communications Network and Electronic Communications Service Regulation of 2004 provides the regulatory structures with which the sector is governed, and includes the option for the government to take control of the networks in the event of a severe crisis.44

Another large component of preparedness efforts is the electronic communications infrastructure built and run for the express purpose of preparedness: Nødnett. While some countries rely on communications networks mainly centred around emergency services, Nødnett covers the broad spectrum of crisis response. Fire, health and police services naturally have access to the network, but so do a range of other relevant actors, such as government ministries, county authorities, energy providers, and NGOs for example. This helps the relevant actors communicate securely during crises, avoiding networks more vulnerable to downtime or overload.

Counterintuitively to the larger trend of globalisation, telecommunications providers and their chains are remaining domestic. This is in part due to the emergence of security concerns surrounding these critical infrastructures, but also due to profitability and propriety considerations.45 More and more societal critical infrastructures are dependent on the functioning of the telecommunications infrastructure, increasing protectionist thinking.46 One example of national reactions is the debate on the supply of 5G technologies offered by the Chinese firm Huawei. Several nations, including Norway, have voiced concerns over offering contracts of such critical importance to distant interests.47 Another example is the push to build redundancies: the primacy of TeliaSonera’s core network is seen more and more frequently as a vulnerability, and alternative core networks, such as Nødnett, are designed to spread the risk.48

The development of new technologies, such as cloud services and fibre transmission, increasingly provides opportunities to abandon a tiered infrastructure, such as local networks branching out from regional networks, which in turn branch out of core networks. Transmission nodes acting like filters between infrastructure levels are being replaced by cloud or fibre ‘thoroughfares’, eliminating the need for steps in the system.49 This could also open up the possibility of telecommunications capacities being housed in server farms outside of national borders, disrupting the current supply systems. What challenges and opportunities this poses for the sector remains to be seen.

SWEDEN

The sector encompasses several hundred suppliers, from local to multinational service and infrastructure operators, and the rate of technological change affecting them is rapid. Accordingly, there are multiple ways to group the actors, technologies and infrastructure within communications and digital

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40 Interview with NSM.
41 Interview with NSM, Norway, 18 September.
43 Interview with NSM.
47 Interview with NSM.
49 Interview with NSM.
The most significant providers of the infrastructure necessary for electronic communications are the partly state-owned Telia Company AB and Telia Wholesale; Telenor AB Sverige, which is controlled by the Norwegian state; Telia Sverige AB and Hi3G Access, which are controlled by Hong Kong-based CK Hutchison; IP-Only, the state-owned Teracom, Netnod; Stokab (Stockholm); and Gotthnet AB (Gothenburg). Other relevant providers of communication services are companies such as Telia, which utilises the networks operated by Svenska KRAFTnet, Ellevo, Vattenfall Distribution and E.ON. The entities listed above provide networks including wire and wireless transmission, nodes, access networks and access points. The major providers of mobile communication services are Telia, Tel2, Tre (Hi3G Access), Nets and Telenor. Additionally, two authorities - the Swedish Transport Administration and Svenska KRAFTnet - own and operate significant national networks.

Such communications infrastructure is critically dependent on energy supply, primarily electricity. Other dependencies include resources such as personnel, as well as deliveries of hard- and software, spare parts and fuel. Some sectoral risks mentioned during interviews and in risk and vulnerability analyses are natural hazards such as windstorms and thunderstorms, and fires in supply tunnels, which can affect equipment and cause disturbances lasting up to approximately one week. A long-lasting power outage or a longer disruption in the supply of energy, hardware or personnel could equally cause handing over of services and active components; assets and connections of national and international importance; certain incident management and corrective maintenance elements, and communication between vital societal functions in all sectors.


Furthermore, the Swedish Forums for Crisis Preparedness on Technical Infrastructure (SOTI) is another forum for coordinating disaster preparedness and civil defence activities initiated by the central governmental actors in Sweden. Its aim is to strengthen responsible actors’ ability to prevent and manage events that cause disruption to supply of energy, electronic communications, water, information and media.

A fresh development in total defence is taking place in Sweden. For instance, PTS is conducting training and exercises on civil defence with relevant sectors, among others, which in turn affects the emergency management preparedness planning. Interactors at the agency also anticipated that public actors would need to develop their procurement procedures, and that they could place more reliability requirements on private operators to maintain their systems and supply chains during disturbances. They also brought up a need to develop a new and sustainable system for financing the higher requirements for civil defence currently unfolding in Sweden.

Cooperation

Finland, Norway and Sweden routinely participate in established transnational regulatory agreements, such as on radio-frequency spectrum and standardisation through the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Some pivotal platforms include the OECD, which facilitates member state cooperation in data governance, privacy and digital security, and NATO, with which the three countries engage in different forms of cooperation, such as, for instance, having ad hoc working groups on cyber defence cooperation. As the digital field is rapidly developing, the themes are not strictly confined to specific platforms, and discussions and measures overlap with each other.

For EU Member States Finland and Sweden, as well as for Norway, the EU is an important platform for addressing issues linked with digitalisation. One of the most prominent themes is cyber security, and the Cybersecurity Strategy of the EU, launched in 2013, followed by the directive on network and information security (NIS) in 2016 and the EU Cybersecurity Act adopt

ed in 2019, lays out the swiftly developing basis for a union-wide approach. The regulation requires each Member State to establish their own NIS authorities and response teams, creates a cooperation group for Member States to enhance strategic cooperation and to support the exchange of information, gives a permanent mandate for the EU Cybersecurity Agency, and sets in movement a framework for European Cybersecurity Certificates in order to harmonise standards for countering cyber threats throughout out Union. The EU is also important to Norway: the country has adopted the NIS Directive and takes part in the Digital Single Market, a European Commission initiative to support e-commerce, improve telecommunications infrastructure, and ensure the digital development of Europe as a whole. Norway adheres to the EU requirements for competition in telecommunications by allowing enterprises with large market shares to rent existing infrastructures; Telenor, for instance, has been subject to this requirement for several years.

To facilitate cooperation amid increasing digital solutions, the five Nordic countries have a general agreement on the mutual protection and exchange of classified information. Recently, strides have been taken in some bilateral and trilateral schemes. A prominent example is the integration of the Norwegian Nednett, the Finnish Virve and the Swedish Rakel, public safety communication networks. Norway and Sweden have partnered with Motorola and Airbus Defence and Space to manage the ISJ project, which aims to ensure seamless command and collaboration in communication between Nednett and Rakel. There are also good examples of cooperation measures among countries in maintaining communication networks: Sweden has received assistance from Estonia, Lithuania and other countries to repair infrastructure following storms and other incidents. Countering cyber threats has also been a theme for Nordic cooperation. The momentum for such collaboration was already growing at the time of the Stoltenberg report in 2009, and the Nordic Council has recently reiterated the need for closer coopera-
...preparation in digital services and solutions constitutes a multi-faceted and prominent area for trilateral cooperation.

For instance, the authorities have established GovCERT, a graded communication network for alerting, analysing and preparing responses to digital attacks, and cooperation between the Nordic Computer Emergency Response Teams has been developed to reap force multiplier benefits from the exchange of information and best practices. The NORDEFCO, a Nordic military cooperation forum, has served as a forum for both high-level and low-level arrangements. Additionally, new bilateral initiatives emerge, such as Finland and Sweden making initial attempts to explore their cyber capabilities together.

To perform an initial assessment, preparedness in digital services and solutions constitutes a multi-faceted and prominent area for trilateral cooperation. Finland, Norway and Sweden are currently building national measures to accommodate, and to an extent find alternatives to, critical digital infrastructures and services that rely on functional cross-border connections. They also make use of their institutional memberships, most importantly in the EU and NATO, to pool resources, share best practices and set common standards. While bilateral and specific Nordic arrangements exist, regional collaboration complementing the national and wider multi-lateral efforts has not reached its full potential, even though calls for more determined measures have been voiced for some time.67

The pretext for further cooperation is there. Finland, Norway and Sweden are adopting digital operations and services, such as cloud computing services, at roughly the same pace, and share the ambition of staying on top of the global and European trend in digitalisation (figure 2). They also rely on digital infrastructure operated from abroad, and many IT houses providing digital services to societally important companies and organisations are international entities. In the future, artificial intelligence, quantum computing robotics, the Internet of Things, smart automation of traffic, mass data, and positioning and temporal systems for traffic are just some of the many fields in which innovations may disrupt societally critical infrastructures in the three countries.68 Cooperation to strengthen preparedness measures in specific sectors, such as energy or transport, may falter if the national solutions in digital security to accommodate such technology are incompatible.

Some preconditions are yet to be filled. Engaging in deeper cooperation requires compatible policy approaches to digital security. The three countries could find synergies in identifying the best solutions, as long as the collaboration schemes can be harmonised with measures taken at national level.69 This report highlights that the national approaches to cross-border dependencies can become more aligned. To illustrate, each country wrestles with concerns related to foreign elements in the digital infrastructures and services. To some practitioners, an organisation that takes up cloud-based solutions makes its IT systems less exposed to disruptions by disseminating its data centres abroad. To others, extraterritorial critical infrastructure exposes the organisation to further disruptions.70

More than in any other sector, the field of preparedness in digital operations and services is immature, with the threats and solutions to them in flux, and few institutionalised solutions available.71

67 Interview at the NESA, Finland, 14 May.
69 Interview at the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority, Sweden, 29 August.
71 Interview at a cyber security company, Finland, 12 August.

Figure 2: Use of cloud computing services by enterprises, % of enterprises, 2018.
Source: Eurostat 2018a.
As small economies, the Nordic countries have trouble maintaining sufficient competence and personnel within the country to manage their spearheading digital systems and solutions.

Discussion

This section discusses some suggestions for further cooperation compiled during the research. One way for Finland, Norway and Sweden to facilitate fruitful collaboration is to develop more aligned agreements regarding partnerships in digital services and solutions. These could include the national authorities coordinating their interactions with a set of key companies that serve as key providers throughout the region. Major IT companies operate in most Nordic countries, in which they are subject to multiple, sometimes diverging, regulatory environments. Surely, the authorities must retain control of who can operate nationally vital digital services. However, further coordination regarding the way the national authorities make deals with cross-nationally operating IT houses can benefit the sharing of best practices as a whole. A linked cooperation scheme could involve developing similar terms and conditions for the operators in the Nordic countries with regard to implementing EU regulations.

Another area for collaboration could be to strengthen existing cooperation platforms for cyber security or to build new ones if needed. For instance, the countries could reap scale benefits by pooling together resources for risk analysis on physical infrastructure and research on machine learning. Undoubtedly, it is unclear whether new cross-border units could be of use in areas in which institutions for collaboration already exist. Strengthening current platforms for collaboration, such as the Nordic Financial CERT in the banking sector (see chapter 4), mixed with support for new elements, such as the forthcoming EU cyber cybersecurity competence centre, can help enhance the region’s readiness to resolve cybersecurity challenges. Generally, as many challenges in cyber security are faced by each country, key insights to solving them could be gleaned by pooling instead of sequestering the information.

A third potential area for collaboration is to tackle the shortage of national expertise needed to manage the digital infrastructure and to counter cyber threats. For instance, the Finnish Security Committee highlights that although the level of digital know-how in Finland is high, specific operations and services often hinge on the expertise located or acquired abroad. An interviewee in Sweden voiced a similar concern regarding lack of expertise during major incidents, cyber-related or otherwise. As small economies, the Nordic countries have trouble maintaining sufficient competence and personnel within the country to manage their spearheading digital systems and solutions. Instead of trying to nurture national capacities in all areas, the authorities in Finland, Norway and Sweden, or in the Nordic countries as a whole, could cultivate shared expertise, for instance by jointly financing and organising training and staff exchange programmes in cooperation with universities and companies.

As small economies, the Nordic countries have trouble maintaining sufficient competence and personnel within the country to manage their spearheading digital systems and solutions.

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72 Interview at the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority; interview at a cyber security company, Finland, 21 August.
73 ibid.
74 ibid.
77 Interview at the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority.
Energy

Countries

FINLAND

The primary state-level public institutions overseeing the energy sector in Finland are the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and the Finnish Energy Authority. Finnish society consumes electricity produced using a range of energy sources, the most important of which are wood fuels, oil and nuclear energy. The country remains a net importer of electricity: around 23 per cent of the electricity supply is provided by net imports, and during cold winter days the reliance grows significantly. Most imported electricity comes from Sweden with further purchases from Russia and Estonia.

In 2018, energy sources for total consumption were as follows: wood fuels (27%), oil (22%), nuclear energy (17%), coal (8%), natural gas (5%), net imports of electricity (5%), others (5%), peat (5%), hydro power (5%), and wind power (2%). Statistics Finland (2019): Energy in Finland.

OVERVIEW

This section discusses the production, transmission, distribution and use of electricity and energy carriers, which are vital to contemporary Nordic societies. A special characteristic of the Nordic region is its deeply integrated electricity market, which reflects a longer trend towards collaboration made possible by the countries’ complementary energy mixes (figure 3). Cooperation between the national grid operators, or Transmission System Operators (TSOs), started already in the 1960s. In the 1990s, hydropower imported from Norway and Sweden was seen as useful in Denmark for replacing expensive domestic production during peak consumption. Mutual trust between the stakeholders involved has been a key element facilitating a system of closely interdependent national electricity networks. Additionally, the EU has supported regionalisation as a step towards European internal energy markets.

Another regional characteristic is the cross-border nature of the major energy companies. To illustrate, the Finnish Fortum and the Norwegian Statkraft, both state-owned power generators, operate across the Nordic countries; St1 controls over 1300 St1 and Shell branded retail filling stations in Finland, Sweden and Norway, the Finnish state-owned company Gassum is a leading regional distributor of LNG and supplier of biogas; and maintenance service providers for the electricity grid, such as Efet, Empower and Maintpartner, operate across borders. The connections between the three countries’ energy sectors are deep, involving multiple arrangements to mitigate disruptions in them.

81 Ollila, Jorma (2017): Nordic energy co-operation: Strong today – stronger tomorrow, 29
82 Eurostat (2019a): Shedding light on energy in the EU.

80 Interview at the NESA, Finland, 22 October; interview at an energy company, Finland, 17 September; interview at an energy company, Finland, 10 September; IEA (2018): Energy policies of IEA countries. Finland – Executive summary.
Finland is undergoing a shift towards renewable and smart energy systems. The use of fossil fuels decreased in the generation of electricity and district heat by 12 per cent in 2017, and the proportion of renewable energy accounts for of total energy consumption has risen between 2010 and 2018 by 10 percentage points, from 27 to 37 per cent. Finland aims to stop the use of coal as a source of electricity and heating by 2029. The transition will also affect imports, for instance as biomass is increasingly used not only for power and heat generation but in second-generation biofuels, whereby raw materials will have to be potentially imported from elsewhere. Investments in biofuel facilities are part of a wider shift away from fossil fuels, which includes making use of renewable energy sources, the ongoing construction of Finland’s fifth nuclear power plant, and the planning of its sixth such facility.

The primary national agencies fostering resilience are the Energy Authority, the regulator, and the NESA, which provides a platform for information-sharing, guidance and peer-review tools for companies. Energy production, transmission and distribution networks are considered as critical infrastructure services in Finland, and accordingly treated as high priority. Even short-term outages can have severe cross-sectoral effects in Finnish society, as the digitalised economy depends on electricity. Extensive and long-term disruptions in domestic electricity distribution have resulted exclusively from weather conditions. While the last nationwide power outage occurred in the 1970s, fallen trees and compacted snow have caused extensive long-term regional interruptions in power supply also recently. In 2010 and 2012, blackouts due to major storms created momentum for the reformed Electricity Market Act, as a result of which energy companies are investing heavily in improving the reliability of the domestic distribution networks. Furthermore, Fingrid, the national grid operator, owns and leases reserve power plants, which are used in emergencies, for instance when a fire at Fingrid’s Olkiluoto substation led to two nuclear power plants being brought to a halt in July 2018. Additionally, changes in the international availability of electricity and energy carriers can have a severe impact. Generally, the supply of both has remained stable. The Nordic electricity market has provided a steady source of electricity, and from a Finnish perspective, this is regarded as a reliable supplier of oil and gas. Were the situation to change, Finland stockpiles coal, oil, nuclear fuel and domestic peat. For instance, the importers of oil and oil products have a statutory stockpiling obligation corresponding to the volumes they import. Reserves located both in Finland and abroad equate to several months’ consumption of oil. Finland participates in international coordination to mitigate any supply risks, for instance through the International Energy Agency and the OECD. As a step towards an integrated internal energy market, the EU has been a major financial supporter of the Balticconnector pipe, which will provide Finland with a new source of natural gas.

The energy transition will pose a multi-faceted challenge to the country’s security of supply efforts. Fossil fuels have formed the basis for Finnish stockpiles as sources of electricity and heating. If the facilities for burning fossil fuels are gradually phased out, they have to be replaced with new arrangements. New energy sources, in turn, will create new dependencies: for instance, the domestic production of biomass is unlikely to cover the estimated demand if new biofuel technologies are to serve international markets. Finally, the Nordic countries executing their own energy transitions might hinder Finland’s national preparedness efforts, if they lead to a situation in which imported electricity for peak consumption becomes less available.

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84 Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (2019): The act banning the use of coal for energy generation in 2029 to enter into force in early April.
90 OECD (2019a).
93 Finland’s oil stocks equal 240 days of 2017 net-imports, whereas the IEA expects the minimum of 90 days from its members, IEA (2016): 3–4.
The government is the sole remaining player when it comes to Norway's national energy security. This applies in particular to electricity, which is the most important component of energy security. Norway is self-sufficient in electricity, and this margin of self-sufficiency is even higher when one takes the risk of a potential nationwide blackout into account. Norway’s electricity system is a national one. The consumer is both producer and user, making the Norwegian model an ideal example of a self-regulating system. The government is responsible for ensuring that electricity is produced, distributed, and consumed in a safe and reliable manner. Norway has a long history of self-sufficiency in electricity, dating back to the 19th century, and this has been a key factor in the country’s economic and social development.

The Norwegian government has always been committed to ensuring that electricity is produced and distributed in a way that is both sustainable and secure. In recent years, the government has taken bold steps to ensure that Norway remains a leader in the field of renewable energy. The country has set a goal of producing 80% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030. This has involved a significant increase in the use of wind, solar, and hydroelectric power. Norway is also a world leader in the development and use of electric vehicles. The government has set a goal of having all new cars sold in Norway be electric by 2025.

The Norwegian government has also been a strong advocate for international cooperation in the field of energy security. The country has been a leading voice in the development of the Nordic Energy Network, a regional organization that brings together the energy sectors of the Nordic countries. The network aims to promote a more integrated and secure energy market in the region. Norway has also been a vocal supporter of the International Energy Agency, which works to promote energy efficiency and the development of a more secure and sustainable energy system.

In conclusion, Norway’s success in ensuring energy security is due to the government’s commitment to sustainability, innovation, and international cooperation. The country’s success serves as a model for other countries looking to build a more secure and sustainable energy future.
agreement was made between five political parties in Sweden, stating as a goal that all electricity production is to be renewable by the year 2040. In 2016, the government reiterated this goal.124

Regarding the supply of heat and cooling, the markets are very limited geographically, comprising one or a few towns at a time. In the metropolitan areas, however, heating systems are being interconnected between municipalities, making the systems more flexible and robust.125

Since the energy sector encompasses many different energy sources, it is exposed to a wide spectrum of threats. Various international, national, and natural hazards but also deliberate actions, such as sabotage and terrorism. The threats also change over time due to changes in the energy systems themselves. Furthermore, the geographical scope of the market is different between energy sources: for example, the oil and fuel trade is part of a global market and thus exposed to geopolitical factors, while disturbances in the supply of electricity often occur at local level.126 While, as indicated above, the international connections of the sector vary between these different energy sources, generally, the companies in the sector, as well as their subcontractors, are international through both ownership and markets, which can lead to national agencies lacking jurisdiction over them.127

The Swedish Energy Agency is an administrative agency whose responsibilities include promoting security of supply in Sweden’s energy systems. The agency develops and coordinates the crisis management for the energy regulators of the Nordic countries, as well as monitors and analyses the sector and supports the Authority of Electricity Contingency Planning of Sweden.128

The newly resumed total defence planning in Sweden addresses energy preparedness as one of its elements.129 Swedish legislation requires public agencies to reduce societal vulnerabilities and to develop a capacity to perform their tasks even during crises and war. These efforts involve collaborating with and supporting other agencies during crises, conducting risk and vulnerability assessments, and participating in collaboration forums (Samverkommenheter) with other agencies. The Swedish Energy Agency (Energi- och kraftnät and the National Electrical Safety Board all have such legal responsibilities.130 However, there is no national actor with a responsibility for preparedness in the energy sector as a whole, and the obligations are divided between many different public actors.131

Finland, Norway and Sweden are all members of the International Energy Agency (IEA), an autonomous body within the OECD framework, which was designed to help countries coordinate a collective response to disruptions in the supply of oil.132 Connected to the IEA, the International Energy Pro- gramme (IEP) obliges member states to have stockpiles of oil corresponding to 90 days of net imports, to take measures to reduce the consumption of oil, and to participate in a system for the distribution of oil between the member states during a crisis. As stated above, Norway as an oil exporter is exempt from the stockpiling requirement. Another international platform of relevance is the EU, as its regulations, among other things, address the countries’ oil stocks, natural gas and electricity markets and supply, and infrastructure investments.132 For instance, as a component of its climate strategy, the EU obliges member states to finalise their National Energy & Climate Plans (NIEPs) by the end of 2020.133 European cooperation on power grids takes place through ENTSO-E, an organisation populated by the European TSOs. Together with the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER), ENTSO-E maintains detailed guidelines and network codes enacted by the European Commission into European law. Norway, while not an EU Member State, strictly adheres to EU energy regulations.134

On a Nordic level, the most important arrangement is the Nordic Power System Authority, which is the Nordic electricity market owned by the Nordic and the Baltic countries’ TSOs.135 The deep integration of power grids between Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden facilitates and necessitates close coordination between the Nordic energy authorities, as one country’s choices in grid investments, market solutions and operational security measures will affect the entire synchronous system. Hence, the national TSOs communicate regularly with each other. Furthermore, NordBVer serves as a specialised forum on emergency preparedness for the Nordic energy and electricity authorities and the TSOs. The forum has two overarching goals: to promote ongoing exchange of information and experiences for preparedness planning regarding supply of electricity, and to perform such planning at Nordic level to complement national activities. Its activities include, for instance, Nordic risk and vulnerability assessments and joint exercises.136 Though not entirely explicitly about security of supply of energy, there is also a cooperative research platform under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers – the Nordic Energy Research. Nordic Energy Regulators (NordREG) is a linked organisation for the energy regulators of the Nordic countries to develop the Nordic and European electricity markets, and the Nordic Regional Security Coordinator, a joint office for the four Nordic TSOs, supports these operators in maintaining the operational security of the power systems across the Nordic countries. Some Nordic cooperation also takes place on more specialised fuels, such as jet-fuels and fuels used in shipping. In general, though, this kind of bilateral or trilateral cooperation is scarce.137

To provide an initial assessment, Nordic coop- eration on energy security is partially very institu- tionalised, as the integrated electricity market has necessitated preparedness collaboration between the Nordic countries. The Nordic countries do not, however, cooperate equally in all relevant areas. Collaboration on fuel supplies takes place primarily through coordination at the EU level as the EU set the basic requirements for oil storage and other measures, which are then complemented with national and bilateral arrangements. Instead of there being a dearth of collaborative arrangements, the multiple schemes overlap with each other. For instance, one interviewee lamented that NordBER, a platform specifically built to address preparedness issues in the Nordic energy sector, is somewhat underutilised, as the TSOs have their own communication channels and members participate in the activities with varying levels of enthusiasm.138

According to another interviewee, there is a need to harmonise the diverse schemes in place and to develop them further, rather than to come up with new, redundant structures to tackle the same issues.139 In a sense, the situation is welcome: there are overlapping platforms in place, which can be harnessed for trilateral or wider collaboration, if issues to be tackled through joint action emerge.

Cooperation

120 Swedish Energy Agency (2015), 7, 9, 19, 30, 39.
121 Swedish Energy Agency (2015), 12.
122 Interview at the Swedish Energy Agency.
125 Interview at the Swedish Energy Agency, Sweden, 4 September.
126 Interview with Statnett.
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Cooperation

121 Swedish Energy Agency (2015), 7, 9, 19, 30, 39.
122 Interview at the Swedish Energy Agency, Sweden, 4 September.
127 Sweden (2015b).
128 Sweden (2015b).
131 Hagen et al (2017); Interview with Statnett.
132 Ollila (2017), 31–32.
134 Interview with S1.
135 Interview at the NESA, Finland, 13 June.
136 Interview at the Swedish Energy Agency.
Discussion

This section compiles some suggestions for trilateral cooperation, which emerged during the research process. Some are immediate and stem from past experiences, such as the suggestion to share experiences on the kinds of contingency solutions and fuels used during power shortages. However, this section places an emphasis on a wider theme of policy shifts invoked by climate change. With differing energy mixes, especially regarding use of fossil fuels, each country is striking a careful balance between the various environmental, economic and security policy goals they might want to pursue. Nevertheless, one way to deepen the collaboration could be to introduce the growing issue of climate change more systematically on the energy security agenda.

As of yet, the implications of the countries’ climate policies on energy security have not been subject to a structured discussion. Calls for such are, however growing; for instance, the IEA recommends that Finland “[f]oster the dialogue with the Nordic and Baltic neighbours on the design and implementation of climate and energy policies, in particular with regard to cross-border implications of electricity security and adequacy.” Sweden also relies on a mix of fossil fuels, nuclear and renewable energy, as well as imports and exports electricity. Norway finds itself in a somewhat different position, as the country already produces almost all of its electricity through hydro power and sells its oil reserves to international buyers (figure 4). However, due to the integrated electricity market, the looming changes in the Nordic energy mix will affect each country’s means to buy and sell electricity.

A potential joint measure for the three countries could be to coordinate their national climate strategies so that their respective efforts in the energy transition cohere, or at least do not undermine, each other’s energy security. Establishing coherence between climate policies and security of supply policies is certainly challenging even on the national level. However, the countries’ energy policies have the potential to affect each other’s national efforts to ensure access to energy. To widen the informational base needed for improved policy coherence, the countries could engage in joint undertakings to map cross-dependencies between the energy sector and other sectors across Finland, Norway and Sweden. For instance, the countries could find it useful to explore the collective capacity of the Nordic oil refineries to produce both fossil and special fuels vital to transport and other sectors, and to map the supply chains of the machinery and spare parts needed to produce and store energy in new ways. Another linked theme, although far-reaching, is storage. Currently, most emergency reserves consist of fossil fuels. Developing new technologies to store and move energy, for instance in the forms of synthetic gases and hydrogen, is a global challenge. However, the three countries could find it useful to support research and development schemes to store energy, as the countries’ security of supply planning would benefit from having more diverse storage means available in the future.

Figure 4: Indigenous production of energy, 1000 tonnes oil equivalents, 2016
Source: Nordic Statistics 2019a

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140 OECD (2019a).
The major public institutions overseeing the financial sector are the Bank of Finland, the Ministry of Finance, and the Financial Supervisory Authority. The European Central Bank has an important regulatory role: although the major banks in Finland are Finnish or Nordic, and the money transfers they facilitate primarily domestic rather than international, the Finnish payment infrastructure is thoroughly European. The architecture is built around the Single Euro Payment Area (SEPA), which, excluding intrabanks transactions, facilitates the vast majority of all money transfers to, from, or within Finland. The SEPA includes all EU and EEA member states, and its main infrastructure is operated by France, Germany and Italy. Finland transitioned to the European payment architecture parallel to adopting the euro in 2008. In terms of the number of transactions, the SEPA standard is indispensable to Finnish payment transactions, although banks also use correspondent banking relationships for high-value money transfers.

The two dominant banks in terms of market share in savings, mortgages and corporate finance are Osuuspankki (38–40 per cent) and Nordea (27–30 per cent), which are also listed as significant and subject to direct European Central Bank supervision. Danske Bank and Municipality Finance control minor market shares (9–12 per cent each), followed by a number of conventional and online banks.

Osuuspankki has most of its clients in Finland, and its two main competitors, Nordea and Danske Bank, treat the Nordic countries as their home markets. While cross-border payments are on the increase, most money transfers still take place between Finnish accounts.

The Finnish sector itself is bank-driven, and the banking sector centralised and large compared to the GDP. The two dominant banks in terms of market share in savings, mortgages and corporate finance are Osuuspankki (38–40 per cent) and Nordea (27–30 per cent), which are also listed as significant and subject to direct European Central Bank supervision. Danske Bank and Municipality Finance control minor market shares (9–12 per cent each), followed by a number of conventional and online banks. Osuuspankki has most of its clients in Finland, and its two main competitors, Nordea and Danske Bank, treat the Nordic countries as their home markets. While cross-border payments are on the increase, most money transfers still take place between Finnish accounts.

OVERVIEW

Financial market infrastructures comprise a vast whole including large value payment systems, retail payment systems, securities settlement systems, securities registries, central counterparties and trade repositories. In this section, the main thrust is levelled at systems used in large value and retail payments, which are central to societally vital transactions, such as pensions, social benefits, retail payments and salaries. Finland, Norway and Sweden have taken up different approaches to ensuring the stability of the payment systems. Whereas Norway and Sweden have retained their own national institutions, Finland has integrated into the European payment architecture. The countries also diverge in the sense that the use of cash is rapidly declining in Norway and Sweden. Nevertheless, the three countries’ financial sectors are intertwined together by major Nordic banks operating across the region.
A trend affecting payments is the decreasing use of cash in Finland, although the transition is taking place less rapidly than in Norway and Sweden. At the same time, money transfers are becoming faster. Consumers and firms have sought means to update money transfers to meet the needs of modern economies, in which most digital services, such as immediate messaging, take place in real-time. The EU directives and regulation have reinforced and facilitated this trend, urging financial institutions to strive for faster transactions in order to boost economic activity in the European Single Market.

The introduction of new technologies also shapes the payment systems, for instance as banks consider which business functions they can operate based on a cloud-based infrastructure.

Finland’s reliance for both international and domestic transactions on the European infrastructure distinguishes Finland from Sweden and Norway, which have retained national payment infrastructures even as they have adopted the SEPA standard. There is no national backup system akin to, for instance, Bankgirot in Sweden, which could clear and settle domestic, inter-bank transactions were Finland cut off from connections with the European infrastructure. Although Finnish authorities have considered the need for a national solution, Finland’s prevailing strategy remains to strengthen the European architecture instead of building a costly domestic alternative.

Various disruptions to the Finnish payment system may originate from abroad, as the cross-border nature of the infrastructure enables problems elsewhere to spread rapidly to Finland. There are no easy ways to insulate domestic payments from such risks. Ensuring that physical linkages to European data centres – such as submarine cables in the Baltic Sea – remain functional is key to both domestic and international bank transfers. The EU is the primary platform on which Finland tries to ensure the functioning of the payment system. This is understandable, as the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union produce regulations affecting the Finnish financial system, and the European Central Bank serves many functions previously held by the Bank of Finland. Many elements of the SEPA architecture, such as the TARGET2 system, are classified as systemically important to the EU because of their vital role in all euro transactions, and are cushioned with multiple duplicate and safety arrangements.

NORWAY

At governmental level, the sector is headed by the Ministry of Finance, under which several subordinate agencies and authorities maintain their own allocated areas. These include, among others, Folketrygdfondet, which manages the Government Pension Fund; the Financial Supervisory Authority, which supervises actors in the sector; and the Norwegian Agency for Public and Financial Management, which assists with the central government’s financial administration. The Central Bank of Norway also plays a large role in the sector, regulating the economy in the pursuit of financial stability. On the private side, 127 banks operate in Norway as of the end of 2018. Among the largest are DNB, Sparebank 1, Nordea, Handelsbanken, and Danske Bank. As in other sectors, digitalisation has major effects on financial infrastructures. Cash is being used less and less: in 2001, the portion of payments and money transfers handled entirely cashlessly was 89 per cent, whereas in 2018 it was 98 per cent. In other words, of all payments occurring throughout the entire market system, only 2 per cent are completed in cash.

Foreign financial technology companies struggle to enter the payment markets, as the Norwegian banking and financial institutions cooperate to create inexpensive and efficient common infrastructural solutions. A central part as a set of services represented by three firms. The mobile payment system

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150 Deloitte (2019).
151 European Central Bank (2020a): What is TARGET Instant Payment Settlement (TIPS)?
152 Interview at a bank, Finland, 18 September 2019; interview at a bank, Finland, 26 September 2019.
160 Interview with Norges Bank, Norway, 2 October.

The digitalisation process is affecting the sector, and one of its major threads is the reduction in cash use.
The Norwegian financial sector runs on largely national infrastructure, but it has evident cross-sectoral dependencies. Most direct, cashless financial transfers rely on energy supply and functioning telecommunications. Symmetrically, the sector is integral to commercial activities in all other sectors. Furthermore, because of the move towards cashless payments, the importance of inexpensive, efficient payment infrastructures is very high.

There appears to be a trend of appreciating the role of the financial sector in preparedness efforts, with financial institutions and organisations taking part in preparedness exercises, engaging in seminars on digital preparedness, and taking note of the increased scope of the revised national Security Act. The risks identified are diverse. For instance, the oil industry, the largest contributor to the Norwegian economy, is bound by law to have the lion’s share of its profits held outside of the country. This means that Norway exports a huge amount of capital and is subsequently reliant on importing capital to cover basic economic necessities.161 This places a potential stressor on security of supply.

SWEDEN

The cornerstone of the financial market infrastructures in Sweden comprises of major systems for handling the clearing and settlement of payments and financial instruments. Riksbank, Sweden’s central bank, is a key actor that provides the real time gross settlement system (RIX) for large value payments (figure 7). Financial institutions use this system to make payments among themselves. Riksbank is also responsible for the nation’s supply, including the production and destruction, of coins and notes. In addition to this, the Swedish National Tax Office and several other authorities carry out tasks, providing services and operate systems important for the financial sector.162

Several private actors have a central role in managing the payment infrastructure. Euroclear Sweden AB is Sweden’s Central Securities depository (CSD) and Securities Settlement System (SSS) provides the clearing and settlement of stock market and interest rates market, and to certain extent financial derivatives. Nasdaq Clearing AB provides a central counterparty clearing system for a range of markets and asset classes. The major banks are SEB, Danske Bank, Nordea, Handelsbanken and Swedbank, as well as Forex Bank and ICA Banken. Bankgirot (Bankgirocentrals BGC AB) provides retail payment systems and is the principal clearing organisation for retail payments in Sweden.

The digitalisation process is affecting the sector, and one of its major threads is the reduction in cash use. Swish is the leading system for retail payments in real-time in Sweden. The major banks jointly own the company Getswish, which provides the system. They also own Finansiell ID-Teknik BID AB, which in turn provides the principal electronic identification system, BankID, used by about 8 million people, authorities and companies on a regular basis for private and public digital services. A potential concern regarding the reliance on the payment system is the foreign ownership of providers important to the Swedish financial market infrastructure. Some key functions, such as those related to clearing and settlement services, financial messaging, and large-value payments, are provided by companies headquartered elsewhere in Europe or beyond. Many of them, for instance the Belgian-based SWIFT or the US-based Nasdaq, also have operations in other Nordic countries. As in other sectors, foreign ownership does not by itself constitute a threat, as it can lead to efficiencies and provide assets and functions that would otherwise be unavailable. However, being aware of the foreign connections, and addressing potential disruptions to them in contingency planning, is an increasingly pivotal element of preparedness efforts in the sector.

Riksbank has made special agreements with suppliers of products and services, for instance regarding

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161 Interview with Finans Norge, Norway, 11 October.
162 Interview with Finans Norge.

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Cooperation

Most of the European cooperation takes place within the SEPA standard. On the Nordic level, there are specific arrangements, such as the Nordic Financial CERT, which aims to strengthen the Nordic financial industry’s resilience to cyber-attacks. Its member banks and institutions come from all five Nordic countries. The Nordic central banks also cooperate to some extent, informally sharing information and competence among each other. The exchange between the Finnish central bank and its Nordic counterparts on these issues has not been as extensive, presumably due to differences in the countries’ payment systems.164 Denmark, Norway and Sweden share the same software provider of payment system for large value payments, which fosters their exchange of experiences and the coordination of requests to the provider regarding customisation of the software.165 Similar arrangements between Finland and other Nordic countries are less extensive: Finland uses the euro, and the European SEPA remains the standard for Finnish payment transactions.166

As an initial analysis, the three countries are likely to retain somewhat diverging measures to ensure the stability of their societally important large value and retail payments. Norway and Sweden have built their payments systems on national infrastructures, whereas Finland’s relies on the European infrastructure. To provide some perspective, the major banks in the region have long acted as Nordic rather than national entities. For instance, since 2018 a group of Nordic banks and Mastercard, a financial services company, have worked on P27, a platform for real-time and cross-border payments in the Nordic countries.167 As part of contingency planning, the project is to run on several IT platforms located across the Nordic countries.168 The slight asymmetry between nationally based systems and the thrust of the private sector to develop regional schemes characterises prospective future cooperation schemes.

The direction of collaboration between the national authorities remains unclear. Norway took part in the early discussions surrounding the P27 project, but the board of the Norwegian financial industry organisation, Finance Norway, decided to abandon the Nordic P27 initiative and focus on further improving the domestic financial infrastructure.169 Accordingly, the Norwegian authorities have expressed little interest in deepening collaboration with their Finnish and Swedish counterparts. In Sweden, the national payment system faces costly updates, which has created at least an initial discussion on the prospects for cross-border collaboration. Illustratively, the Swedish banking sector has been more interested in pursuing the P27 initiative. Hypothetically, a Nordic payment platform could serve as a mechanism through which at least some vital Finnish payments, both domestic and international, could be channelled were the SEPA connections disrupted. For now, however, the Finnish banks are advancing the P27 initiative based on a commercial logic.

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164 Interview at Riksbank.
166 FIDI-FINANS stands for the Forum för informationsdelning om informationssäkerhet i finska sektoren. Translation authors’ own.
167 Interview at Riksbank.
168 Interview at Riksbank.
169 Interview at the NESA, Finland, 8 May; Finnish Ministry of Finance (2018).
Discussion

This section compiles some proposals for further collaboration. Although the countries have differing starting points, this diagnosis might change in the future, as the cross-border linkages between the financial sectors of the three countries grow ever denser. The major banks are already Nordic entities, and their competition to stay on top of the digitalisation trend will shape the existing payment systems. Accordingly, one measure that could be taken by the national authorities is to potentially formalise and strengthen the dialogue with each other and the private sector regarding the potential preparedness implications of any Nordic payment solutions. Furthermore, as especially Norway and Sweden are experiencing a shift towards becoming cashless societies, another joint action could be to improve their exchange of information and best practices regarding risk management in societies reliant on digital money transfers (figures 8 and 9). Finally, while the focus in this report has been on payment systems, they comprise merely one element in the societally vital financial market infrastructures. A third measure the three countries could take is to support cross-border collaborative entities, such as the Nordic Financial CERT, to identify common challenges in the financial market infrastructure as a whole. Further arrangements between the relevant national authorities, such as staff exchange and formal communications lines on preparedness issues between the central banks, can also be elements in deeper trilateral collaboration, provided that they are judged as worthwhile in each country.

...the major banks in the region have long acted as Nordic rather than national entities.
Food

Countries

FINLAND

The proportion imported content accounts for in the Finnish food market has grown over the last 15 years. Although many food products are made in Finland, their production takes advantage of inputs brought in from abroad. These inputs include chemicals and chemical products, such as plant protection products; general disinfection and cleaning agents; raw materials, such as plants, grasses and crops; semi-manufactured products, such as soya protein; and energy, often in the form of crude oil, coal, natural gas and refined oil products. Additionally, specialised machinery, such as vehicles for transporting livestock, often originates from abroad. Many food inputs stem from or arrive through the EU, reaching Finland through Amsterdam, Rotterdam and other big European ports.

Nevertheless, the Finnish food sector remains less dependent on imports than the respective sectors in, for instance, Sweden and Denmark. Even if many intermediate inputs stem from abroad, a significant proportion of the items on the food market are produced domestically. Exact percentages depend on the calculation method used, some ranging between 72 and 75 per cent. Finland exports grain, and its meat and dairy production meets the domestic consumption, indicating that most products in an average Finnish food basket are or can be produced in the country.

Food distribution for final consumers is highly centralised. Two companies, the K and S Groups, manage their networks of distributors and retailers, controlling 36 per cent and 46 per cent of the grocery retail sales in Finland, respectively. Lidl, a recent entrant, has captured 10 per cent of the markets. All three chains source food products from Europe and beyond, either individually or teaming up with other, international retail chains to land better deals with producers.

OVERVIEW

This section centres around activities to produce, process and distribute food to consumers, especially primary production, food processing and retail. Finland, Norway and Sweden all import food products, mainly from the EU area. Domestic food producers rely on production inputs, such as fuels, fertilisers, packaging materials and spare parts, as well as on IT systems and other operations, sourced from abroad. The largest producers operate across the Nordics, buying from and selling to markets beyond their home country. The food sector is also increasingly dependent on access to energy, transport and financial services. Agriculture, aquaculture and food industry actors harness new technologies to increase productivity and outputs. Companies grow into large units, specialise into specific products, and favour a ‘just-in-time’ type of supply instead of long-term storages. Amidst these changes, Finland, Norway and Sweden have retained largely national measures to ensure their supply of food.


175 Interview at the NESA, Finland, 2 May.

176 Finnish Grocery Trade Association (2018): The grocery trade market in Finland.
Finnish food production is also characteristically run by several major companies, such as Valio and Fazer, with their own established market segments. The producers operate across the Nordic countries. To illustrate, in terms of ownership and market areas, Yara, a major chemical company partially owned by the Norwegian state, produces fertilisers in Finnish factories, and HKScan and Atria, meat and food producers, have a strong presence both in Sweden and Finland.

Weather affects food supply in different ways: storms occasionally slow down maritime cargo deliveries in the Baltic Sea, and draughts have caused financial losses to farmers in the Baltic region. Agriculture takes place across the country, exposing the northern farms to colder weather conditions than producers in Sweden, where agriculture is concentrated in the south. However, contemporary challenges to food security are characteristically cross-sectoral. Disruptions in Finnish access to food supplies may involve power outages in major European harbours, cyber-attacks against the digital systems of the distribution centres, or malfunctions in payment platforms used in grocery stores. Rapid changes in local or regional demand, for instance due to epidemics or mass evacuations, are some examples of events that would complicate efforts to ensure food supplies to the whole population.

Finland has stable national arrangements in place to maintain its supply of food. The grain storages owned by the Finnish state, together with reserves held by wholesale operators and farmers, could meet the average consumption for more than 12 months. The NESA and the Finnish Food Authority, two state agencies overseeing preparedness efforts in food security, maintain close collaboration, involving scenario-building and exercises, with major producers and retailers. The EU’s agricultural subsidies also help support Finnish domestic production of staple food in the integrated European markets. Finland’s relatively strong agricultural production, while dependent on access to energy, transport, IT services, and other inputs, forms the basis of Finnish preparedness efforts in food security.

NORWAY

In broad terms, Norwegian meat and dairy production can cover the national demand, and Norway is entirely self-sufficient in fish (figure 5). However, in the supply of grains, fruits and berries, vegetables, sugar products and, importantly, feed, the country relies on imports. A large portion of the imported inputs consists of feed for fish and meat production. The EU Member States, especially in northern Europe, provide a major share of the imported agricultural products.

Domestic producers encompass a wide range of actors, such as Tine Produsent, Orkla and Mondelez. There are three major grocery-chains in Norway: Coop, Rema and Norgesgruppen. These grocery chains manage their own distribution. In addition to this, Servicegrossistene and Tine Distribution also distribute food products. The commercial grocery chains also have contracts with international suppliers, but retain a decidedly domestic focus, as the Norwegian producers are well acquainted with national dietary preferences and food norms.

The governmental responsibility in Norway for food rests mainly within three ministries. The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries (NFD) coordinates

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180 Interview at the NESA, Finland, 2 May.
182 DSB (2017).
183 Interview with NFD.
184 Interview with Orkla, Norway, 23 September.

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Figure 8: Aquaculture production, tonnes of live weight, 2017
Source: Eurostat 2018b
food supplies in the event of a crisis, and preparedness efforts in farming, ocean farming, food industries and distribution of food products. NFD also follows up on the fourth of NATO’s Seven Baseline Requirements on resilient food and water resources.186 The Ministry of Agriculture and Food (LMD) coordinates preparedness efforts in farming, and monitors the agricultural markets in order to ensure the continuation of supply of agricultural products in a crisis, which means enabling Norwegian production and supplementing demand with imports. The Ministry of Health and Care Services (HOD) also bears responsibility within the food sector. LMD together with relevant public agencies to reduce the vulnerabilities of society and to develop a capacity to perform their tasks even during crises and war.199 The Swedish Food Agency, the Board of Agriculture and the National Veterinary Institute (SVA) are three major public agencies with relevant responsibilities in the food sector. In 2010, the Swedish Food Agency was assigned formal responsibility for coordinating and planning crisis and preparedness activities within the food sector, excluding primary production.190 The agency facilitates studies within the area of security of supply for food, and organises regular meetings for representatives from public agencies and private companies in order to set up a network of stakeholders. Apart from this, some public actors have specific responsibilities for providing food for persons within their care, for instance hospitals and schools.

Cooperation

On a continental level, food security is one of the foundations of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy. NATO provides a venue in which Nordic and Baltic countries, especially NATO member states, have an opportunity to cooperate regionally on food security. However, Nordic cooperation on the theme remains rather light. National authorities and other actors in the food sector, often bilaterally, meet and exchange knowledge in the area of crisis management and security of supply.197 Many activities are informal; for instance, Finland and Norway have discussed food logistics from and to northern Norway, although their bilateral agreement on the exchange of goods and services in crisis and warlike circumstances does not specify food security as a theme for cooperation.198 However, it is informally understood that they would also cooperate in food shortage scenarios that should the need arise. Equally, Norway and Sweden have a bilateral agreement on trade in times of crises, but it is largely considered outdated and non-functional, and does not directly address food security. Finland and Sweden have a similar agreement.

imports and the national production of grain can be sustained in a crisis. Supplementing Norway’s self-sufficiency in terms of fish, these two sources of food will be enough to keep an acceptable level of supply. The ministry considers a complete halt in grain imports unrealistic. In the event of shortage of supply, Norway considers itself capable of keeping up with price increases.184 Norway enjoys access to a series of markets through WTO, EFTA and EEA agreements. No budget funds have therefore been allocated for long-term grain storage.

SWEDEN

Cereals, mostly wheat, barley and oats, as well as grassland for fodder, dominate the domestic crop production. Due to different climate conditions, the regional preconditions for production vary greatly. In southern Sweden, oil seed and sugar beet dominate, whereas potatoes are grown in the northern parts. Horticultural production of fruits, vegetables and berries takes place primarily in the south of Sweden. The dairy and livestock sectors, including the production of cattle, sheep, pigs, fowls and chickens, play a central role in Swedish agriculture.183

Food processing is one of Sweden’s largest industries. Although the sector consists of a large number of small companies the food production is concentrated in a handful of larger, often internationally operating companies.184 Some of the largest companies in the Nordic countries that operate on the Swedish market are Lantmännen AB, Fazer, Orkla, HK Scan and AKK. Many trademarks on the Swedish market are owned by the agricultural cooperative Lantmännen AB, a major player both in Swedish and European markets. The food retail market is divided between six companies: ICA gruppen AB, Axfod AB, Coop AB, Bergendahls AB, Lid AB and Netto AB, the first of which is the dominant actor with approximately half of the market share, followed by Axfod AB and Coop AB. Together, the three firms controlled 86 per cent of the market in 2018.192 Besides these actors there are also several companies acting on the Swedish market for food service. Several of the larger companies within food service are owned by large international companies located in other countries. The term ‘Swedish market share’ can be used to describe the relationship between the production in Sweden of a specific product and the total sales of that product on the market, expressed in quantity. Based on such calculations, it is evident the production of primary products can meet the national demand for several products, such as in grain, milk and certain vegetables. Domestically produced meat, dairy and eggs also retain a high share in the markets. But for several other products Sweden is to a large extent dependent on imports.196

During the period 2008–2018, the imports of food and agricultural product increased by approximately 6 per cent annually. These imports mainly originate from other EU countries. In 2018, imports from the Nordic countries, measured in economic terms, totalled 15 per cent from Denmark, 3 per cent from Finland and 2 per cent from Norway. Sweden also exports food and agricultural products to other Nordic countries: 20 per cent of the total value of the export is due to export to Norway, 15 per cent to Denmark and 11 per cent to Finland.185 Besides trade in food and agricultural products the Swedish food sector has many other international linkages, for instance though the ownership of the companies and dependencies in the production and distribution of food products.199

No major shocks have affected the supply of food in Sweden in recent decades, although minor disruptions have served as reminders that vulnerabilities exist. In 1998, a snowstorm in Gävle hindered food distribution, in 2002 a large power failure in a suburban Stockholm area made it difficult for 10 000 individuals to store and prepare food, and in 2018 a drought put pressure on Swedish farmers, affecting the harvest and their ability to feed the livestock. As in other sectors, while companies’ primary responsibility is to fulfill their contracts with other companies and clients, Swedish legislation requires public agencies to reduce the vulnerabilities of societies and to develop a capacity to perform their tasks even during crises and war.199

186 Apart from the quality of fish, which is part of NFD’s portfolio.
187 DSB (2017); interview with NFD.
To provide a brief analysis, the three countries maintain their distinct food security policies. To a different extent and in different ways, they strive to ensure that they can draw on alternative sources in the global food markets if the established commercial agreements are disrupted, and that they can step up their domestic, relatively efficient food production if wider issues in imports occur. Surely, the countries’ arrangements and their scope differ. Finland has retained grain storages for decades, whereas Norway and Sweden have had them disassembled, choosing to rely on the global grain market and alternative sources of nutrition. Norway can compensate for its relative lack of arable land per capita through its extensive resources for fishing (figures 8 and 9). From a comparative perspective, their positions are relatively stable, notwithstanding that each country retains dependencies on imported production inputs, such as fertiliser, feed, and machinery, from each other and third countries, and cross-sectoral dependencies, such as on access to electricity, stable IT systems, and open transport routes, at different stages of the food supply chain.

Discussion

This section presents some potential trilateral measures that emerged during the research. An interviewee makes a call to institutionalise the communication between the agencies of respective Nordic countries, creating a framework for more structured interaction and dialogue. More institutionalised cooperation could make it easier for the authorities to operate on similar planning assumptions, as well as to maintain collaboration in the longer run. A further action would be to conduct a joint investigation on the foreign input contents of food production in Finland, Norway and Sweden. Such a study could be built on a research conducted at the Natural Resource Institute Finland, which uses statistical input-output data from Finland, Sweden and Denmark. The investigation could also include looking into individual production inputs, such as farm machinery or fertilisers, which might be acquired from the same sources in all countries, or, for instance, into cyber networks connecting the countries’ food sectors, as many large food producers operate across the Nordics. Another theme would be to enhance the sharing of best practices regarding food security in each country. For instance, Finland is enhancing the resilience of its food distribution channels by ensuring that more than 300 retail shops retain access to electricity during power outages and other disruptions. Such schemes could be replicable in other countries.

Another area of interest identified would be to examine the regulatory standards in each country to ensure that potential trade or the delivery of stocks can take place if access to food products in one country is disrupted. Finland, Norway and Sweden have their national standards related to packaging, food hygiene and production, which might prove an obstacle for cross-border cooperation in crises. Further challenges needing collective action might emerge in the future. A far-reaching measure would be to conduct a study on the impact of global warming on food security in the three countries. For instance, new, globally spreading plant and animal diseases might call for joint measures to prevent contagion.

203 Economist Intelligence Unit (2020): The global food security index.
204 Cf. Economist Intelligence Unit (2020).
205 ‘Tuonti III’, an update to Knuuttila and Vatanen (2015), is currently planned.
206 Cf. Economist Intelligence Unit (2020).
Countries

FINLAND

Finland relies considerably on imports of medicines, and drugs produced domestically are not ‘essential medicines’ satisfying the priority health care needs of the population, but, for instance, hormone products, eye drops and pain killers. While some domestic producers, such as Orion, are owned predominantly by Finnish entities, many are under international or Nordic ownership. Imported pharmaceuticals are manifold and produced outside Finland by major global companies, for instance Johnson & Johnson, Novartis, Bayer and GlaxoSmithKline, which are large enough to bear the significant investments needed to develop and commercialise medicine.

The Finnish system for distributing medicine is extremely concentrated. Two companies, Oriola and Tamro, the former of which is predominantly under Finnish ownership and the latter a part of Phoenix, a major European pharmaceutical trader, control the market country-wide. After the producers have assessed the expected demand, the distributors channel pharmaceuticals on the producers’ behalf to pharmacies, hospital pharmacies and medicine dispensaries. Although the Finnish legislation dictates that pharmacies are to be owned by independent pharmacists, it allows for collaborative arrangements between the pharmacies, and a number of branches of Yliopiston Apteekki, a university-owned pharmacy.

In principle, Finnish preparedness efforts ensure the availability of those medicine that satisfy three conditions: they are critical in the sense that stable access to them is needed for saving and maintaining lives, ‘crisifying’ in the sense that access to them has a high risk of being disrupted; and crisis-specific in the sense that their demand is likely to rise during emergencies. For instance, antibiotics and anaesthetics satisfy the three conditions. However, other products, such as diabetes and heart-related medicine, are also considered in the preparedness efforts.

OVERVIEW

This section focuses on challenges to security of supply linked with the globalisation of the production of pharmaceuticals for human use. The production of medicines is becoming concentrated at key factories often located outside Europe, such as in China and India. Symmetrically, domestic production in Finland, Norway and Sweden is scarce, as the countries have come to rely on the international markets. A global problem affecting the three countries alike has been the increasing number of shortages, which are a combined result of several factors linked with market dynamics, regulation, and intellectual property rights.

As small economies dependent on the global industry, it is difficult for Finland, Norway and Sweden to resolve such challenges alone.

208 Interview at the NESA, Finland, 7 May.
210 Interview at the NESA, Finland, 7 May.
In Finland, attention has recently been paid to the distributors’ data management and logistical systems, a failure in which can lead to shortages of medicine in pharmacies and hospitals. The NESA has facilitated cyber security updates in the health sector. As elsewhere in Europe, many contemporary problems in the availability of pharmaceuticals originate from disruptions in the increasingly complex and globally dispersed supply chains. Although retaining access to international markets is a cornerstone of Finland’s strategy in ensuring a supply of pharmaceuticals, Finland has little control over medicine production taking place beyond its borders. Multinational companies are not likely to prioritise small markets during shortages, as they distribute their pharmaceuticals unevenly among numerous buyers. The obligatory stockpiling in Finland provides a cushion against potential disruptions, but retaining the country as a market and destination for pharmaceuticals is also dependent on imported precur-
sors and active ingredients. The trend towards internationalisation also affects storages: to reap economies of scale, global producers centralise the distribution centres to logistically convenient areas, whereby the storage centres remaining in Norway are run privately by third-party actors.

In Norway, pharmaceuticals are distributed to patients in four ways: i) through the receipt of a prescription at a pharmacy or through home care services; ii) through communal services; iii) through hospitalisation; or iv) through the Armed Forces health service. All four avenues except the first require a contract with either the pharmacy chains or the wholesalers. The pharmacy chains are owned by and serve as sales points for the wholesalers, which include Alliance Healthcare, Apokoden Distribusjon, and Norsk Medisinaldepot, which is owned by the private company Celesio. The Ministry of Health and Care Services (HOD) is responsible overall for the security of supply of pharmaceutical products, and the Directorate of Health (Hdir) subordinate to the ministry coordinates the activities with other actors. The Institute of Public Health (FHI) handles the supply of vaccines and advises on the storage of antidotes in hospitals. The Norwegian Medicines Agency monitors and supervises the security of supply of pharmaceuticals in practice.

The public Regional Health Authorities (RHFs), which are in charge mainly of hospitals, smaller health trusts (HFs) and some pharmacies, have a duty to ensure the availability of pharmaceutical supplies for specialist health services. These RHFs own specific HFs in charge of hospitals’ acquisitions to gather offers of pharmaceuticals used in the service. There is, in addition to this, a National Centre for Shortages of Pharmaceuticals and Pharmaceuti-

Figure 10: Medicine shortage notifications from marketing authorisation holders to the Finnish Medicines Agency, 2010–2019.

Supply of medicinal products in Sweden is part of and dependent on the global market. While some medicinal products are produced domestically, most domestic producers are owned by foreign actors, and production is not reserved for Swedish needs. Medicinal products are predominantly imported.

There are two main channels for patients for getting access to medicinal products: the caregivers (mainly county councils) and the retail pharmacies. The supply chain of these outlets is based on a ‘just-in-time’ logic: deliveries are small and continuous whereas stocks are small. In practice, two large distribution companies perform all deliveries of medicinal products nationally.

Since Sweden is dependent on imports of medicinal products, the country’s access to pharmaceuti- cal Preparedness in the Specialist Health Care Services, located within the University Hospital of Oslo, which monitors the supply situation of pharmaceuticals weekly. Producers of pharmaceuticals are obligated and wholesalers are encouraged to report disruptions to the supply. In cases of disruptions, it is mainly the wholesale, together with the Norwegian Medicines Agency, who work to procure a new supply. Supply is a commercial issue, where producers and wholesalers seek their own contracts. When the RHFs purchase pharmaceuticals, they do so on through bidding contracts or seeking out inexpens- ive solutions. This means that during disruptions, control remains largely in commercial hands, with operators thereby having a much greater freedom to set prices. In turn, this could in some cases mean that problems of national supply are supplanted by problems of commercial access, since Norwegian purchasers are restricted in following rising prices.

SWEDEN

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In other words, profit could trump public welfare.

Cooperation

The EU has a regulatory system on pharmaceuticals, in which Norway also participates. While much of EU regulation focuses on pharmaceutical safety, tackling disruptions in the supply of phar- maceuticals is a rising theme for collaboration. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) works with other European regulatory agencies to minimise the consequences of shortages of medicinal products.

On a regional level, the Nordic Public Health Preparedness Agreement, established by the Nor- dic Group for Public Health Preparedness, or Sval- bardgruppen, is an agreement between the five Nordic countries and their autonomous regions for preparing and developing health and medical care preparedness. The cooperation covers contingency measures and assistance if a signatory country faces an emergency or disaster. Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway also operate a cooperative scheme regarding vaccine preparedness. Sweden participates in the group only as an observer, as it does not supply vaccines. The countries are responsible for securing supply of medicinal products.

Furthermore, Denmark, Norway and Iceland share their markets with each other, and participate in a Nordic forum to share knowledge and experiences in this regard.

Norway and Denmark have a formal agreement to cooperate on pricing and producing bids and offers for pharmaceutical products.

To provide an indicative assessment, medicine shortages have been recognised as a topical problem in each country. In interviews, Finnish private and public actors were united in assessing the situation as being likely to deteriorate in the future. In Norway, the exploration concluded that there is a desire to create a more powerful market position in the global pharmaceutical sector. In Sweden, the rising frequency of disruptions in the globalised production has been identified as one of the drivers to reforms in the current national preparedness measures on pharmaceuticals. For each party, the scale of the issue is relatively new. An interviewee stated that common crisis preparedness exercises often omit the aspect of medical products, simply assuming that there will be enough drugs and devices available to provide effective healthcare in disasters.

The problem remains multi-faceted, and effective national and international measures are not evi- dent. As a large market area with regulatory powers, the EU can wield influence over the requirements set for global production processes in a way that the Nordic countries, separately or together, cannot.

At the same time, the Nordic countries’ deep ties and similar medicinal needs could be used to explore regional, tailored solutions. Furthermore, the national level is not to be eschewed: some countries and institutions are considering domestic measures to mitigate the supply risk. In Norway, for instance, discussions of improving production at home have emerged.
An interviewee stated that common crisis preparedness exercises often omit the aspect of medical products, simply assuming that there will be enough drugs and devices available to provide effective healthcare in disasters.

Discussion

Several provisional measures were compiled during the research process. An overarching form of international collaboration could be for Finland, Norway and Sweden to push the supply issues in pharmaceuticals further on the EU/REAA agenda. A European approach may give rise to regulatory and market-based measures that no Nordic country can realise on its own. While the increase in shortages is being recognised to a growing degree, there is a need to strengthen a common understanding of the issue. For instance, the characteristics of the EU Member States’ domestic markets and regulation may expose some countries to disruptions more than others. Detailed information on the medicines in the market throughout the EU remains patchy, and more systematised data would help identify the roots of drug shortages.

Trilateral and regional collaboration to ensure the supply of pharmaceuticals in the Nordic region can, to an extent, complement European measures. For instance, France has called for a European approach to deal with the supply issues, which involves attracting drugs production back to France and Europe, and suggested that the EU could set up pharmaceuticals, as current order volumes might be too small to persuade global manufacturers to prioritise the region in times of scarcity. Agreements between some Nordic countries provide one pathway that can be developed on a wider basis. However, they would not necessarily mitigate shortages, as even together, the Nordic states are small buyers competing against globally rising demand. A linked action could be to remove some regulatory obstacles in distributing medicine during major shortages across the three countries. National legislations, for instance on prescription and packaging labels, could be better aligned with cross-border preparedness collaboration. Already in normal circumstances, the three countries’ high level of digitalisation may allow for new innovations, such as adopting QR codes, to provide more information on pharmaceuticals. The national authorities and companies could explore such new technologies to reduce intra-Nordic friction, while maintaining high standards to keep counterfeit medicines out of the domestic markets.

Finally, a suggestion, already discussed in a report commissioned by the Nordic Council of Ministers, is to set up a common Nordic pharmacy for rare medicine, which could involve a Nordic preparedness storage facility for critical medicinal products and devices. Currently only Finland has a national, public-private scheme for storing critical medicine, which is intended to ‘buy time’ for the country to locate alternative sources when there is a sudden change in the supply or demand of a medicine. A shared storage facility, either of active ingredients or ready-to-use medicines, would distribute the costs of maintaining the medicinal reserves among the participating countries, while providing a limited cushion against global shortages. Potential hurdles involve agreeing on its location, terms of use and the running expenses involved. Furthermore, as per interviews it is likely that the private sector is not eager to commit to creating new storage facilities. Again, there are lighter measures available. To enhance collaboration, the countries could cooperate to create a shared, real-time inventory of rare medicine that their hospitals and other medical centres have in their inventories.

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248 Interview at a pharmaceutical distributor, Finland, 17 September.
252 Interview at the NESA, Finland, 7 May.
257 Interview at the NESA, Finland, 7 May.
Countries

FINLAND

The artery of the Finnish transport system is the Baltic Sea: ship transport comprises around 90 per cent of the country’s export cargo flows and around 80 per cent of import cargo flows in metric tonnes. Vital cargo routes to Finland connect Finnish ports with Sweden, Germany and Estonia. Truck traffic is gaining in importance as cargo volumes increase on Via Baltica, a southern land route, in which trucks are loaded onto vessels when they cross the Gulf of Finland between Tallinn and Helsinki. Faster and more frequent land and ferry connections have turned the route into a commercially viable alternative to a longer Baltic Sea route. Sea cargo travels from and to Finland as bulk, in modular sea containers and on trucks and trailers loaded on and off vessels. A significant import by sea is oil: almost all crude oil refined in Finland is brought in from the Russian oil ports on the Gulf of Finland, whereas refined oil products are shipped from other destinations, such as from St1’s refinery in Gothenburg, Sweden.

Sea cargo is complemented by transportation on land. The road network is the primary platform for cross-border cargo flows on land between Finland, Norway and Sweden. The rail connections remain less developed: the Finnish track gauge differs from that of its western neighbours, there is only one, unelectrified rail line to Sweden through Tornio, and no passenger rail traffic operates across the western borders. Theoretically, were the access both to the Gulf of Finland and the Gulf of Bothnia limited, land transport through northern Sweden and Norway could provide Finland with access to the Norwegian Sea or through the Danish Strait to continental Europe. However, few commercial actors have had an incentive to develop the land route as long as crossing the Baltic Sea remains a viable alternative. Russia, with several cargo and passenger trains running daily, remains the most important partner in land transports, as Finnish industrial companies import raw materials, such as chemicals and wood, for domestic production.

Air transport remains a primary channel for long-haul passenger traffic. Helsinki-Vantaa Airport is developing into a hub of international transport between Asia and Europe: from 2017 to 2018, the number of passengers grew by 10 per cent to 20.8 million. There are also daily flights between Helsinki and Finland’s other cities, which help connect the wide but sparsely populated country. The airport area is of national importance not only because of the airport: several logistical centres and terminals are located in its vicinity, making it an important logistical hub for transports even when airplanes are not used in the delivery chain.

The major public organisations with a responsibility to advance national preparedness efforts in transport are the Ministry of Transport and Communications, The Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom, the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency, and the NESA. The agencies attempt to identify diverse sectoral risks, including blockages in Baltic Sea traffic due to ice, challenges in major European ports, stand-stills in air supply routes caused by natural hazards, or restrictions in using neighbouring countries’ air space for international flights. Cyber-attacks have been a growing concern for supply chain management systems, as faced by, among others, the logistics companies Maersk and TNT Express, in June 2017.

The public risk mitigation measures taken are as wide-ranging as the risks themselves. In sea transport, arrangements are in place with major cargo and passenger operators, such as Viking Line, Tallink Silja, Finnlines and Eckerö Line, to ensure that sufficient national capacities exist to operate the vital Baltic Sea routes. Some tanker capacity is in state ownership to ensure that shipments continue in both normal and emergency circumstances. In road transport, the authorities monitor the availability of vehicles, such as special-purpose trucks used to carry chemicals, gasses and fuels, in the country to ensure the means for vital inland deliveries. In both rail and air transport, state ownership in key companies, such as Finnair, the national air company, and VR Group, the national rail company, remains partly to ensure that logistics remain operational under exceptional circumstances.

Of the many trends affecting the cargo flows between Finland and the rest of the world, this overview highlights the increased proportion of foreign ownership, personnel and services in logistics vital to the country. Since the early 2000s, several major container terminal operators in Finland have been acquired by foreign owners. Multinational companies can provide their Finnish subsidiaries with the financial backing needed to continue operations through global economic downturns and other hard times. However, foreign owners might not treat logistical infrastructure considered nationally vital as worth maintaining if business incentives to do so are absent, and foreign staff might not be willing to sail on routes important to Finland amidst a tense geopolitical situation. Accordingly, Finnish preparedness planning aims to accommodate the growing importance of multi-national logistics operators, such as Schenker and DHL, in its own efforts.
York railway stations in Norway. 4,200 kilometres of public railway tracks and 334 distances between population centres favours transport in Norway, as mountainous terrain and long distances make air travel by far the most frequently used mode of transport in Norway, as mountainous terrain and long distances make air travel difficult. Some lines do stretch across the country, and the terrain makes expanding railways redundant-capable of the transport modes. Air transport is similarly operated by several large, privately-owned terminals. In Sweden, road traffic is operated by several large, often owned by the municipalities, but in several cases mutual.

In terms of infrastructure, the network and the sea-routes in particular offer rerouting options to replace. Rail transport suffers in that railway lines are fixed and, in many cases, converge in single axes, to which they cannot be replaced by another in the event of a crisis. Perhaps one of the most striking trends in the sector is the move towards electrification and green technologies. This is true across the board of transport modes. Paired with increasing advances in digital technology the sector looks poised to change rapidly in the near-to-mid future. This climate change awareness work affects the entire sector: Norway is committed to the Paris Climate Agreement and aims to, along with Iceland and the EU, cut the carbon emissions of its transport sector by 40 per cent by 2030.284

In Sweden, road traffic is operated by several large, often internationally owned transport companies, such as DB Schenker and DHL, which contract smaller transport companies as subcontractors.285 The smaller companies are important in the regions as well as in specialised transport solutions, such as those involving fuels, oil, and dangerous goods. Most goods terminals are managed by international operators, or by major companies in specific subsectors with their own distribution terminals, such as the food retailer ICA gruppen AB.

The rail transport sector is deregulated, with several domestic and international operators running long-distance and regional transportation of passengers and cargo. Only five per cent of the passenger transport on rails is done to or from other countries.286 Reflected against the volumes of goods transported to or from other countries, rail traffic is more international than road traffic (figure 12), as the Swedish railway is directly connected to Norway and Denmark, as well as to Germany through train ferries. Ports serve as important transport hubs. They are often owned by the municipalities, but in several cases are operated by private companies.287 Ferries are an important subsector of sea traffic. Besides vital domestic connections, such as the route connecting Norway and Sweden, and the Nordic companies operate several connections to other transport infrastructure. Of the 90 million passengers travelling through Swedish harbours travelled to or from other Nordic countries, especially Denmark or Finland.288 Passenger traffic is the dominant form of traffic in air transport. Out of the 248 airports in the country, the bulk of commercial air traffic is operated from the 47 airports certified for regular and charter traffic. The Swedish state owns ten of these through the company Swedavia, whilst the rest are owned by the regions, municipalities or privately. Airports close to major cities, Stockholm Arlanda being by far the largest of them, capture most traffic flows, and Denmark, Norway and Finland are among the six most important destinations.289 Several airlines provide domestic connections for passengers: SAS AB remains an important Nordic actor in air traffic: its two largest shareholders are the Swedish and Danish states, whereas Norway divested its shares in 2018.290

No single public actor has total responsibility for preparedness efforts in the transport sector, but four public agencies have affiliated obligations: the Swedish Maritime Administration (Sjöfartsverket), the Swedish Transport Agency (Transportstyrelsen), the Swedish Maritime Administration (Sjöfartsverket), and Air Navigation Services of Sweden (Luftfartsverket). The first of the four agencies is responsible for preparing the transport sector for an event of a crisis. For example, goods or passengers needing to go from A to B can be transported by sea to the most optimal port, and then traverse the country by rail, air or road, (or any combination thereof) avoiding limits within individual modes of transport. The supply of transport services can thus be described as quite robust. However, transport is highly dependent on other sectors: fuels and electricity are vital, as are control and logistics systems, satellite services, financial services and telecommunications. In turn, getting fuels, food, and other critical supplies to where they are needed requires a functioning transport system. Hence, the dependencies are in many cases mutual.

Perhaps one of the most striking trends in the sector is the move towards electrification and green technologies. This is true across the board of transport modes. Paired with increasing advances in digital technology the sector looks poised to change rapidly in the near-to-mid future. This climate change awareness work affects the entire sector: Norway is committed to the Paris Climate Agreement and aims to, along with Iceland and the EU, cut the carbon emissions of its transport sector by 40 per cent by 2030.284

282 Ibid.
283 Ibid.
with other actors and public agencies within the sector, and for those operators and infrastructure not falling under any other agency’s responsibility.\textsuperscript{291}

Today, the transport sector is dominated by few but large companies.\textsuperscript{292} To involve them, some of the preparedness work in the Swedish transport sector is coordinated by TP SAMS, a voluntary forum for cooperation between private actors and public agencies within the area of transport and societal disturbances.\textsuperscript{293}

The Swedish Confederation of Transport Enterprises, which aims to represent the entire transport sector by serving as an umbrella organisation for associations and companies in the Swedish transportation sector, is an active member of the forum.\textsuperscript{294}

Already in ordinary circumstances the transport sector is subject to various disturbances. Some, relatively conventional threats are posed by climate-related events like snow storms, strong winds, high temperatures or flooding.\textsuperscript{295} Others are more cross-sectoral, such as those linked with telecommunications or financial infrastructure. A paradigm example of a cross-sectoral dependency is on energy: about 75 per cent of the energy used in the transport sector comes from fossil fuels.\textsuperscript{296} These fuels are imported to Sweden from the global markets; crude oil, for instance, primarily originates from the North Sea and Russia.\textsuperscript{297} Disturbances in transport connections may also be caused by component failures, shortages of electricity or breakdowns in telecommunications. Many of these factors have an international dimension, for instance through outsourced operations or a foreign provider.

**Cooperation**

Not all preparedness arrangements in the transport sector can be captured in this overview. The Nordic and Baltic countries, as well as the varying affiliations through the EU and NATO, constitute a multi-layered collection of arrangements through which Finland, Norway and Sweden strive to ensure the stability of vital cargo flows.

Norway’s efforts are intertwined with NATO’s framework, as ensuring a resilient transport function is one of the Seven Baseline Requirements for Civil Preparedness developed by the military alliance.\textsuperscript{298} Through their partnership status, Finland and Sweden have also engaged on logistical issues in the Nordic region with the military alliance. The EU touches on the preparedness dimension in the transport sector in some arrangements. For instance, the Single European Sky (SES) initiative is a European Commission project with the aim of reforming air traffic management across Europe to respond to challenges in future capacity, safety and environmental demands. The initiative arranges the European airspace into international blocks, with the

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\textsuperscript{291} Swedish Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation (2019): Trafikverket ska samordna krisberedskapen och det civila försvaret inom transportområdet.
\textsuperscript{292} Interview at the Swedish International Freight Association, Sweden, 3 November.
\textsuperscript{293} Interview at TP SAMS, Sweden, 8 October.
\textsuperscript{294} Interview at the Swedish Transport Administration, Sweden, 3 September.
\textsuperscript{295} ibid.
Current construction pointing to Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Norway sharing one block, and Denmark and Sweden constituting a block of their own. Cooperation between the Nordic countries is sometimes routine, for instance in planning road or rail work close to or at the borders, whereas ambitions for more strategic cooperation on emergency and security of supply planning ebbed and flowed in the 2010s. The national authorities of the Nordic countries held collective meetings on the theme in 2014 and 2017, but the meetings have not continued. Current cooperative arrangements revolve around specific themes, sea traffic on the Baltic Sea being a case in point: agreements between the countries on the use of icebreakers in wintertime are in place, and the Nordic authorities cooperate on the potential evacuation of ferries. Furthermore, the countries have developed bilateral arrangements. For instance, in 2017 the Swedish Transport Administration and the Finnish Trafiicon presented a Memorandum of Understanding with the aim of creating a more solid base for collaboration. The parties have been meeting on a regular basis, performing table-top workshops to prepare for different kinds of scenarios and crises.

To provide a brief analysis, the three countries’ priorities in securing their cross-border cargo flows are not fully aligned, but there is potential to expand the ongoing collaboration between Finland and Sweden to involve further countries. The challenge remains that any trilateral, Nordic or even Nordic/Baltic framework to secure cross-border cargo flows has to accommodate the countries’ various starting points in a way that ensures all parties retain an interest in maintaining the collaboration as a whole. For instance, whereas Norway’s rugged terrain poses a challenge to intra-country logistics, the country retains coast-wide access to the Atlantic and a strong commercial fleet, and its overlapping networks of road, rail, sea and air transport leave primarily the remote northern regions exposed to a heightened risk of disruptions in logistical flows. Accordingly, Norway’s international cooperation on security of supply planning mostly takes place under the auspices of NATO, and its arrangements with Finland and Sweden tend to serve individual needs, such as to improving logistics in the Finmark and Tromsø region by drawing on the neighbouring countries’ road networks.

To compare, Finnish and Swedish cargo flows are more tied to the Baltic Sea. Finland retains a steady interest in ensuring that the Baltic Sea, its artery of cargo flows, remains open for traffic, as does Sweden, although its location closer to continental Europe and the Atlantic gives the country more alternative channels for cargo than those of its eastern neighbour. However, in response to the changing geopolitical context Sweden is readjusting its priorities, which has contributed to the country’s growing interest in collaborating on Baltic Sea logistics, for instance through bilateral arrangements and its cooperation in the Nordic region.

Discussion

This section presents some collaborative measures that were compiled by the project. One suggestion is to expand the ongoing Finnish-Swedish cooperation by inviting Norway, as well as Denmark, to resume collaboration on maintaining vital transport flows in the Nordic region. From Finnish and Swedish perspectives, Norway joining the arrangements would allow for further scoping of the feasibility of northern land routes in a hypothetical situation in which the cargo routes through the Baltic Sea are unavailable. Were the Gulf of Finland and the Gulf of Bothnia blocked, a northern cargo route to the Norwegian Sea could provide a contingency channel, although limited in capacity and currently commercially undeveloped. While the route is not sufficient for cargo volumes equivalent to those currently shipped over the Baltic Sea, further information on its usability would benefit the countries’ national emergency planning. As pointed out by a Swedish interviewee, a precondition for expanding collaboration in this way is the buy-in of the private sector. It would be beneficial if measures taken were perceived by all parties as useful in normal circumstances as well as in crises. The same call for private sector purchase applies to all three countries: companies are likely to participate more actively in such cooperation that, besides promoting national preparedness, helps them improve their own continuity management strategies.

From a Norwegian perspective, the immediate benefit of further Nordic cooperation in securing cargo flows are less tangible. However, trilateral or wider cooperation could include measures to identify and mitigate potential dependencies that arise from transitioning to new transporting technologies. Innovations in freight transport, such as e-commerce, 3D printing, autonomous trucks and high capacity vehicles, are likely to affect the heavily digitalized transport sector across the Nordic. In a similar vein, if the phasing out of fossil fuels continues, Finland, Norway and Sweden could find it useful to scope their access to and their capacity to produce the biofuels and electricity needed in transportation. Such an investigation might uncover new areas in which the countries could rely on each other. Finally, the research process indicated that at least in Finland and Sweden the logistical sector is increasingly owned and operated by foreign entities. The countries could conduct an initial investigation to assess the mutual availability of tank trucks, cargo containers and other transport infrastructure in different kinds of emergencies. Building a common understanding of the key operators’ commitments in the three countries, as well as comparing steps taken in each with regard to the international ownership of key transportation infrastructure, could help reinforce the interlinked system of cargo flows in the region.

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71 Critical Nordic Flows Transport
By engaging with perspectives across the public and private sectors in Finland, Norway and Sweden, this report has compiled a total of 28 provisional themes for further collaboration on security of supply and critical infrastructure protection. This endeavour has not exhausted the measures that could be taken. More detailed follow-up studies are in demand, as the need to better understand cross-border flows and cross-sectoral dependencies vital to contemporary Nordic societies is only likely to be accentuated. Furthermore, the measures compiled are provisional and intended to be examined by policy-makers and experts. This conclusive chapter suggests that a cross-sectoral take is useful in developing the next steps for collaboration, and outlines three complementary approaches for making new associations.

One approach is to seek for common interests in and across the six sectors explored. This report argues that Finland, Norway and Sweden share many challenges, because they are forerunners in the process of digitalisation, and constitute small economies exposed to disruptions in the global supply of pharmaceuticals. In the energy and transport sectors, the countries’ starting points are partially aligned: their preparedness efforts are likely to be affected by the energy transition, and they share some, if not all challenges related to vital cargo flows in the future. Likewise, while the countries’ payment systems run on differing infrastructures, areas for collaboration may emerge as the private sector pursues new cross-border initiatives and the societies become increasingly cashless. Finally, the countries’ largely independent national measures to ensure food security may benefit from the sharing of best practices and formalising some of the existing collaboration. In and across these six sectors, Finland, Norway and Sweden can combine different measures to help overcome their diverging priorities if such arise.

A second approach is to bring together similar types of measures. Some suggestions considered in this report are about strengthening the shared informational base. Comparing the three countries’ relative import dependencies in the food sector, exploring their shared capacity to acquire essential medicines, and working together to identify cross-sectoral dependencies between the energy sector and other sectors, such as on transport fuels, illustrate areas for joint analysis. Other suggestions involve changes to the existing platforms. These include harnessing old fora to tackle new themes, such as the role of NordBER in the energy transition;
encouraging thematic, cross-border set-ups that pool expertise and share information, such as the Nordic Financial CERT in the financial sector; and creating new arrangements, for instance through common pharmaceutical storage facilities or shared inventories. A third group involves harmonising regulatory requirements across the three countries to facilitate better cooperation during disruptions in flows of goods, products, and services. They are well illustrated by the suggestions to refine the regulation concerning the flows of pharmaceuticals and food products between the three countries during major shortages.

A fourth group includes measures to enhance cross-border policy coherence, as captured by the suggestion to synchronise the countries’ national climate policies to accommodate energy security, or the call to smoothen the pooling of Nordic digital expertise by aligning the ways the national authorities strike deals with key IT providers.

A third approach is to realign the level of international collaboration at which specific issues are addressed. Some suggestions in this report can be advanced by expanding currently bilateral dealings. The Finnish-Swedish cooperation on preparedness in transportation, and the first steps the two countries have taken to address cyber security, can constitute such areas. Some of the measures in this report could be used in updating on a bilateral or trilateral basis the countries’ relatively dated bilateral agreements on economic co-operation during crises. In other cases, collaboration might involve working together on wider fora, as the five Nordic countries, as the Nordic/Baltic region, or in the EU and the NATO, with which Finland, Norway and Sweden remain differently affiliated. Problems in the global supply of pharmaceuticals, for instance, are rooted in global supply chains that the three countries have few direct means to manage, although they can try to cushion themselves against shortages through national and international measures. Finland, Norway and Sweden could benefit from a dialogue aimed at differentiating those themes that are best pursued as a trio from those challenges that are to be primarily tackled at other levels of collaboration.

Finally, the thematic areas of security of supply and critical infrastructure protection set special requirements for any joint arrangements. This research project engaged both with private and public sector experts to reflect that the buy-in of the companies, whose operations underlie many critical societal functions, as well as of other societal stakeholders, is a central component in realising the comprehensive security and total defence approaches in the three countries. Involving key actors and organisations to shaping the national approaches strengthens the coherence and durability of the arrangements built together. Throughout, this report has attempted to serve those domestic discussions on the best way forward. If the right combinations are found, trilateral cooperation can serve as a valid tool for Finland, Norway and Sweden to address the challenges associated with cross-border flows and dependencies.
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