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Nordic Civil Protection and Host Nation Support

– Solidarity put into Practice



**Nordic Civil Protection and Host Nation Support
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Preface

The covid-19 pandemic was an illustration of the challenges of giving and receiving help during serious crises. The challenges were not unique for the Nordic region. Besides new pandemics, the Nordics are facing a wide range of other risks and threats over the years to come. The deteriorated security situation across the Baltic Sea region has clearly demonstrated the value of close regional cooperation. More frequent and extreme weather events will continue to challenge the region, as well as growing vulnerability gaps in an increasingly digitalised information society.

Being able to provide assistance in times of need is at the core of the Nordic solidarity declaration from 2011. The Nordic Haga cooperation has identified giving and receiving help, including Host Nation Support (HNS), as an important goal for the period 2022–2024.

The purpose of this report is to provide food-for-thought on the development of Nordic cooperation in this area. The report includes a description of the current state of work within the Nordic countries, as well as a road map with concrete proposals for further joint action in the period up to 2024 and beyond.

Stockholm, 31/03/2022

Charlotte Petri Gornitzka, Director General

The Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB)

Key Messages

- The impact from climate change, with more frequent and extreme weather events, an increasingly digitalised information society with growing vulnerability gaps, and a deteriorated security situation in the Nordic neighbourhood all provide increased incentives for Nordic cooperation.
- In light of these developments, to give and receive assistance, including Host Nation Support (HNS), has become even more important. HNS is a central goal for the Nordic HNS cooperation for the period 2022–2024.
- The purpose of this report is to provide food-for-thought on the development of Nordic cooperation within HNS. The recommendations to develop Nordic cooperation within HNS could be taken forward jointly, based on a bilateral or a trilateral cooperation model where transparency and openness is key.
- The areas proposed for further joint action up to 2024, and as a first step, are the following:
 - Investments in mutual learning through training and exercises.
 - Developing an overview of existing legal and financial arrangements to support Nordic HNS.
 - Joint assessments of risks, vulnerabilities and dependencies.
 - More in-depth cooperation between Nordic duty officers.
 - Assessing the need for HNS in case of supply disruptions.
 - Cooperation on civil-military aspects of HNS – emergencies.
- The areas proposed for further joint action as a next step are the following:
 - Further developing robust and secure communications for crises and emergencies.
 - Cooperation on civil-military aspects of HNS – heightened alert or war.
 - Removing legal and financial obstacles for HNS.

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A photograph of a long, modern bridge spanning a body of water. The bridge is supported by concrete pillars and has a blue-painted steel truss structure. The water is dark blue with small waves. The sky is a clear, pale blue. In the foreground, there are dark, jagged rocks. A vertical red line is positioned to the left of the text.

A robust Nordic
region without
boundaries

1. A robust Nordic region without boundaries

1.1 Solidarity put into practice

Cooperation among the Nordic countries is deeply rooted and includes almost all areas of society. “The Nordic region shall become the world’s most sustainable and integrated region” is the vision for 2030 set by the Nordic Prime Ministers.¹ This is supported by the vision: “A robust Nordic region without boundaries”, which guides Nordic cooperation within civil protection.²

Through the Nordic Declaration of Solidarity, announced in 2009 and reinforced in 2011, the Nordic countries declared their political willingness to cooperate in the spirit of solidarity and to provide mutual assistance to meet common risks and threats.

The Nordic Declaration of Solidarity provides a basis for the joint ambition of the Nordic ministers responsible for the Haga cooperation to further develop the capacity for Host Nation Support in the region in the period 2022–2024.

1. See www.norden.org/en/information/action-plan-vision-2030.

2. See www.msb.se/siteassets/dokument/om-msb/internationella-samarbeten/haga-i-deklarationen.pdf.

1.2 Drivers of cooperation – risks and threats in the region

An important driver for enhanced cooperation in the region is the current risk and threat development. The impact from climate change, with more frequent and extreme weather events, an increasingly digitalised information society with growing vulnerability gaps, and a deteriorated security situation in the Nordic neighbourhood all provide increased incentives for cooperation. Hybrid threats will remain an important challenge ahead.³ However, the ability to assist each other in addressing such risks and threats raises major challenges for the countries in the region.

The covid-19 pandemic was a demonstration of the need for further strengthening mechanisms for cooperation at all levels. This was not unique for the Nordic region. Challenges in providing mutual support were apparent across Europe. This has further reinforced the importance of preparing jointly in order to be able to meet similar crises in an efficient way in the future.⁴

3. *Strengthening civil preparedness – Based on the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) National Risk and Capability Assessment 2021*, MSB 2021.

4. See conclusions from the meeting of Nordic Prime Ministers within the Nordic Council on 1–4 November, 2021: www.norden.org/en/news/prime-ministers-we-must-strengthen-our-joint-crisis-preparedness.



1.3 The aim and scope of this report

This report aims to provide food-for-thought and suggestions for a way forward in developing the capacity for Host Nation Support in the Nordic region. It includes potential areas for further development, in a short-term and more long-term perspective.

The focus of the report is on Host Nation Support in the context of peacetime crisis and emergencies – drawing on previous recommendations and existing cooperation. Civil-military perspectives are included primarily in relation to natural disasters where military assets can support civilian efforts.

The report also points more broadly to some of the future challenges for Nordic cooperation on HNS, relating to a situation of heightened alert and war.



A photograph of several flagpoles with Nordic flags (Danish, Finnish, and Swedish) flying against a bright, cloudy sky. The flags are arranged in a diagonal line from the bottom left to the top right. The text "Nordic cooperation – venues and agreements" is overlaid in white, with a red vertical line to its left.

Nordic cooperation – venues and agreements

2. Nordic cooperation – venues and agreements

2.1 The Nordic Haga cooperation

The Nordic Haga cooperation dates back to April 27, 2009 when the ministers responsible for civil protection met at the Haga Palace outside Stockholm for discussions on strengthened Nordic cooperation in the area.

The ministers noted that similar developments are taking place in the Nordic countries. The common and overarching goal was to prevent and limit the potential consequences of major accidents, natural disasters and other crises and emergencies.

This way, the countries created a political umbrella to strengthen both the ability of the individual Nordic country and that of the collective Nordic region to withstand and deal with vulnerabilities and threats of various kinds. On the one hand, there are differences in how the countries each organise their work in these respects, and there are differences in the arrangement of the various Haga ministers' specific responsibilities. The vulnerabilities and threats, on the other hand, are to a large extent common in nature and there is a shared understanding of the value of cooperation in strengthening the resilience of the societies in the region.

The Haga ministers have been meeting annually since 2009 and a group of senior officials from each Nordic country supports the cooperation. In 2013, in Vaxholm, the ministers agreed on a new joint declaration, the Haga II Declaration. It includes a common vision: A robust Nordic region without borders.

The Haga II Declaration sets the course for a more practical and goal-oriented approach with the development of multi-annual, political goals. The goals for the period 2022–2024, are:

- Identifying lessons learned from covid-19 in the civil preparedness area and strengthening cooperation.
- Tackling the consequences of climate change through prevention and preparedness.
- Enhancing the capacity for Host Nation Support.

2.2 Previous and ongoing work on Host Nation Support in the context of Haga

In 2013, the Swedish government commissioned the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) to analyse and report on how the practical requirements for Host Nation Support between the Nordic countries in serious peacetime crises could be developed. The report contained a number of proposals agreed jointly by the Nordic countries.⁵

The proposals included establishing a network in which experts can exchange experiences on HNS. Another area for common activity was exercises, where the Nordic countries agreed to make practical use of planned exercises with a possible HNS component. The report also suggested cooperation on risk- and capability assessment as a way of identifying risk areas that could trigger a need for providing and receiving assistance. In addition, the report also underlined the value of developing the structures at national level for a mutual exchange of situational pictures, establishing a closer network between duty officers. Furthermore, the report highlighted other areas such as cooperation on logistics and emergency communication.

As a result, the Nordic countries initiated agency level cooperation across many of the areas suggested in the report, and created a dedicated network of experts on HNS as well as launched several other initiatives to promote work in line with the conclusions.

In 2018, a broader cross-sectoral stocktaking of Nordic cooperation within Haga was made, as a Swedish initiative, which resulted in a number of recommendations supporting the need for further work on elements relevant also in the context of HNS.⁶

This previous work provides a basis for the suggestions put forward in this report.

5. *Förbättrade möjligheter för stöd inom Norden – Samordnad utveckling av praktiska förutsättningar för stöd mellan de nordiska länderna vid kriser och allvarliga händelser i fredstid*, MSB, 2014.

6. *Building Resilience in the Nordic Region – A Swedish perspective*, MSB, 2019.

2.3 Other existing Nordic collaborations

In 1989, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden launched the Nordic rescue service cooperation, Nordred, based on a framework agreement.⁷

The agreement enables cooperation between responsible authorities in the Nordic countries with the aim to facilitate mutual assistance with peacetime emergencies and to accelerate the deployment of responders and equipment.

The main focus of Nordred is on facilitating cross-border assistance at local and regional level. A great number of cross-border regional and municipal agreements between municipalities in Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Denmark have been concluded in connection with the Nordred agreement.

There are also several agreements in other areas designed to clarify and establish frameworks for Nordic cooperation in crisis and emergency preparedness⁸ as well as other ongoing development projects (for a list of examples see Appendix 2).

The Barents Euro-Arctic Rescue Cooperation is based on the Agreement on Cooperation within the field of Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response between Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia. The aim of the cooperation is to improve the possibilities of the rescue service agencies in these countries to cooperate across the national, federal and regional borders on emergencies in the Barents Region. Among the core activities are the Barents Rescue Exercises. HNS as well as border crossing are regular elements in the exercise. Lessons learned from these exercises should also feed into the work in the Nordic context.

Besides existing Nordic cooperation focused on peacetime emergencies and crises, there is also increasing cooperation underway focused on preparing for situations of heightened alert and war. Joint meetings between responsible officials within Haga and the established Nordic cooperation structure on the military side, NORDEFCO (Nordic Defence Cooperation), illustrate this ambition to find common ground and increase cooperation in areas of mutual relevance.

7. www.nordred.org.

8. NordBER (electricity preparedness), Nordhels and the Svalbard Group (health preparedness) and agreements in the maritime area, to mention a few.

2.4 EU cooperation on civil protection and EU guidelines on Host Nation Support

Over the past ten years, EU cooperation on civil protection has developed rapidly and EU cooperation in this area now provides a framework for cooperation in the Nordic region too. All the Nordic countries participate in the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), as member states or participating countries.

Notable developments include the establishment of a common reserve of capacities at the EU level called rescEU. RescEU works as a “last safety net”, aiming at boosting the preparedness and response capacity for different types of crises, including forest fires, pandemics and serious CBRN-events.⁹ Some of the Nordic countries are already hosting rescEU capacities. RescEU complements the Civil Protection Pool where Nordic countries have contributed with capacities and experts for many years, across different areas. Nordic countries also contribute to the training and exercise programmes of the UCPM.

Work is also ongoing to develop scenarios and Union Disaster Resilience Goals that will guide work on prevention and preparedness over the years to come. Through the creation of a common Knowledge Network, a stronger linkage to science has been established which will pave the way for new initiatives in the area of capacity building.

In order to support the effort of member states and participating states to provide and receive assistance through the UCPM, the EU developed non-binding guidelines for Host Nation Support in 2012.

The EU guidelines define how a country, as provider, recipient, or as a transit country, can prepare itself for a situation in which EU or international assistance is required. According to the EU-guidelines, HNS is defined as “(...) all actions undertaken in the preparedness phase and the disaster response management by a Participating State, receiving or sending assistance, or the Commission, in order to remove as much as possible any foreseeable obstacle to international assistance so as to ensure that disaster response operations proceed smoothly. It also includes the support that Participating States can provide to facilitate international assistance transiting through their territory by land, sea or air.”¹⁰

9. European Commission, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid operations, rescEU, ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/resceu_en.

10. European Commission, Brussels, 1.6.2012 SWD(2012) 169 final. Participating states here means those countries participating in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.





Host Nation Support in the Nordic countries

3. Host Nation Support in the Nordic countries

The Nordic countries have all taken important steps to develop their national work on HNS. Extreme weather events, such as forest fires, floods and volcanic eruptions, as well as other threats and risks affecting the region have provided important incentives to this work. Below is a summary of the most important national level initiatives.¹¹

3.1 National-level initiatives

All Nordic countries have developed, or are planning to develop, guidelines on HNS directed towards all levels in the national crisis preparedness systems. The EU guidelines and other international guidelines provide a basis for this work.

A majority of the Nordic countries have established HNS functions (HNS cells, HNS capacities or HNS Standard Operating Procedures), to support responsible actors when providing and receiving assistance. The Nordic countries also share the view that exercises is an important tool to test and develop HNS procedures.

Besides participating actively in the ongoing work to develop capacity for mutual assistance within the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, the Nordic countries are all participating in cooperation within NATO civil preparedness – Denmark, Norway and Iceland as NATO-countries and Sweden and Finland as close partners through the Enhanced Opportunities Programme, but currently in process for membership. Furthermore, Sweden and Finland have bilateral agreements with NATO on HNS, an important component in the national efforts.

11. For more in-depth descriptions of the work within the Nordic countries, see Appendix 1.

Denmark

... has recently prepared an operational guide for liaison officers and staff officers in the HNS organisation. To support the practical implementation of HNS, the Danish HNS organisation includes the following functions:

1. Communications officers for foreign assistance units;
2. Reception centres at every harbour/border crossing;
3. Coordination support for the local preparedness staff/staffs and;
4. a HNS-cell, which supports coordination of incoming help.

Finland

... is preparing to develop a range of HNS-measures at the national level. Finland also has a national HNS-working group, with representatives from disaster response agencies and regional public authorities. It ensures national level implementation of the EU guidelines on HNS, as well as EU Civil Protection legislation. Furthermore, Finland has integrated EU HNS-guidelines as part of national legislation. The Southwest Finland Emergency Service has developed an operating model and a training package for HNS situations.

Iceland

... issued a new civil protection policy in 2021. The policy is extensive and outlines Iceland's ambitious goals for strengthening civil protection and preparedness. According to the policy, the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police will develop guidelines on HNS, in close cooperation with other relevant authorities and crisis responders. The guidelines should be ready by the end of 2022. The Minister of Justice has presented a bill to the Icelandic Parliament suggesting amendments to the Icelandic Civil Protection Act. The amendments enable Iceland to adopt a clear legal framework for HNS.

Norway

... reviewed its national regulations in 2010 and has since then been conducting a comprehensive HNS project. The work included reviewing Norwegian regulations of relevance to HNS, analysing existing international framework agreements and other agreements, establishing HNS in the Norwegian administration, and involving relevant sectors in the work with developing a national framework for HNS. In 2013, the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB) developed new guidelines for HNS to Norway in line with international guidelines for HNS.

Sweden

... has developed national guidelines on HNS as well as sector-specific guidance for incoming support by air, taking in to account the specific rules and procedures that apply to airports. Sweden also aims to develop specific guidance for receiving help in tackling CBRN-situations. Moreover, Sweden has developed a specific capacity for HNS composed of designated and trained personnel and equipment. The task of this capacity is to support Swedish actors when receiving incoming assistance and to support the incoming assistance in terms of logistics and in their communication with Swedish counterparts.

In Sweden, the civil-military perspective on HNS is a priority. The Swedish Armed Forces and MSB are jointly developing coherent planning for total defence and has identified HNS as one of the six prioritized focus areas.¹² The Swedish Armed Forces is cooperating with relevant civil actors implementing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on HNS with NATO. Furthermore, MSB has started a project aiming at strengthening the capacity receiving both civil and military assistance in times of crises and heightened alert.

12. *Handlingskraft: Handlingsplan för att främja och utveckla en sammanhängande planering för totalförsvaret.*

A photograph of three firefighters in full protective gear, including helmets and turnout coats with reflective yellow stripes. They are gathered around a large blueprint, which one firefighter is holding open. The firefighter on the left wears a helmet with 'Rd1' in red. The firefighter on the right wears a helmet with '314' in red. The firefighter in the center is bald and has a beard, looking down at the blueprint. They are standing in front of a white fire truck with orange emergency lights. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Further developing Nordic cooperation in Host Nation Support



4. Further developing Nordic cooperation in Host Nation Support

The recommendations below aim to provide a first step in the further development of cooperation on Host Nation Support in the Nordic region.¹³ The overall focus is on testing existing concepts and procedures and finding practical ways of increasing an exchange of experiences and promoting inter-operability.

4.1 A first step – in view of 2024

The Nordic countries should aim at agile methods to enhance their cooperation. National developments differ across the countries and Nordic cooperation initiatives need not always include all countries in the region at the same time or at the same pace. In some cases, two or three countries may spearhead an initiative, allowing the others to join at a later stage or to be involved in some aspect of an initiative. A so-called “variable geometry” approach. The key factor is transparency and openness. The recommendations for further action listed below could thus be taken forward jointly, based on a bilateral or a trilateral cooperation model.

¹³ The following proposals are based on results from previous work. See for example: *Förbättrade möjligheter för stöd inom Norden – Samordnad utveckling av praktiska förutsättningar för stöd mellan de nordiska länderna vid kriser och allvarliga händelser i fredstid*, MSB 2019 and *Building Resilience in the Nordic Region – A Swedish Perspective*, MSB 2019.



Investments in mutual learning through training and exercises

Joint training initiatives and exercises help build a common culture where there is an increasing exchange of reference frameworks, languages, networks, working methods and approaches. A common Nordic culture will facilitate deepened cooperation. Through training initiatives, practical obstacles to cooperation can also be identified and then eliminated. The Nordic Executive Course and the so-called Hanaholmen-initiative are two examples of activities designed to achieve these effects.

The Nordic countries should establish a regular and structured exchange and coordination of HNS related activities to promote mutual learning. The aim is to increase predictability when providing and receiving assistance in a Nordic context. The exchange will for example focus on terms and definitions in a national and Nordic context, experiences from implementation of HNS guidelines, including experiences from exercises with a HNS component as well as cooperation and coordination in the development of different national HNS functions. Seminars/workshops serve as a useful format to drive this exchange forward.

Moreover, the Nordic countries ought to establish exercises as a way to gain more in-depth cooperation. Exercises are an important tool to develop national HNS, providing an opportunity to identify key areas in which the Nordic countries need deepened cooperation. Exercises also provide a possibility to test and develop existing arrangements and to identify lessons for future work.

Work is ongoing to establish a network for exercises between Sweden, Finland and Norway within the area of crisis preparedness. The aim is to develop long-term exercise planning, a common understanding of national needs and priorities as well as to exchange lessons learned. The network is currently discussing how and to what extent HNS is to be included in exercise planning and conduct.

A basis would be the development of an overview of exercises where an HNS component is or could be included in the period up to 2024.

A Nordic tabletop exercise on HNS could be arranged as a way of identifying areas for further Nordic cooperation.

Developing an overview of existing legal and financial arrangements to support Nordic HNS

An overview of existing legal and financial arrangements in the Nordic context should be developed and serve as a basis for further discussions concerning areas to prioritize to enable efficient mutual assistance. The point of departure could be a mapping of existing arrangements at national level with a focus on identifying similarities, gaps and possible areas for further cooperation. Such an overview should draw on existing work. Lessons learned from previous HNS-situations could serve as a starting-point to identify the relevant national arrangements to analyse.



Joint assessments of risks, vulnerabilities and dependencies

Work with cross-border effects of accidents and other serious events in different areas is underway within the framework of several broad international agreements or in accordance with rules and guidelines within the EU. The Nordic countries should further develop joint analysis on risks, dependencies and vulnerabilities within more specific areas, emphasizing cross-border risk assessment, scenarios and knowledge development focusing on areas where mutual assistance could play a role. A platform for these activities already exists through the Nordic forum for national risk assessment and strategic foresight/future analysis established in 2013.

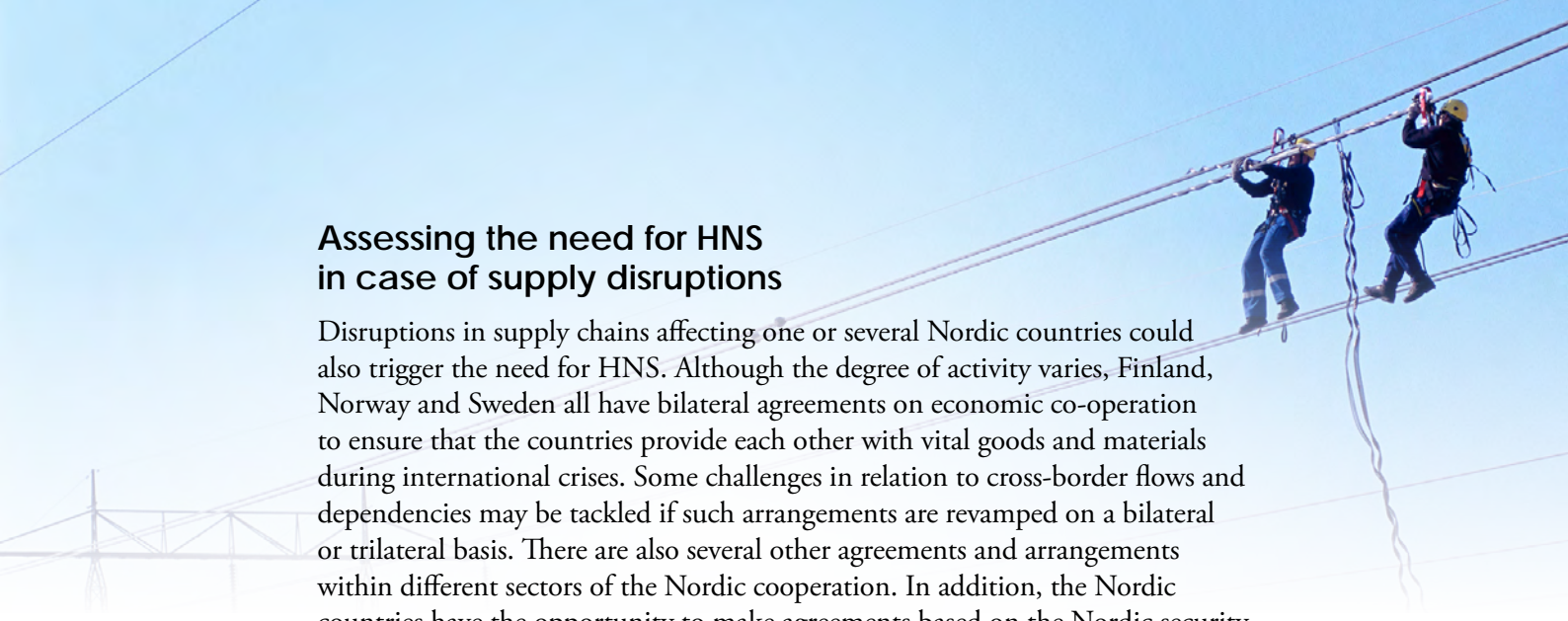




More in-depth cooperation between Nordic duty officers

An important part of Nordic cooperation on HNS is the ability for duty officers to coordinate and exchange situational awareness reports. Communication between duty officer-functions in Sweden (MSB), Denmark (the Danish Emergency Management Agency), Norway (the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection, DSB), Finland (Ministry of Interior) and Iceland (the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police) is already taking place. The duty officers in the Nordic countries have tested the lines of communication on a regular basis since 2015. They have exchanged valuable situational reports on numerous occasions during the covid-19 pandemic and during events such as the landslide in Norway (Gjerdrum, 2020) and the forest fires in Finland (2021). There is, however, room for further developing this cooperation with a focus on strengthening regular exchanges, developing ways and methods for early warning, drawing on new tools for technical support.

Geographical data through the Geographical Information System (GIS) could add value to the national HNS capability. A Nordic GIS-network has already been established and provides a basis for further integrating GIS as part of cross-border cooperation within HNS.



Assessing the need for HNS in case of supply disruptions

Disruptions in supply chains affecting one or several Nordic countries could also trigger the need for HNS. Although the degree of activity varies, Finland, Norway and Sweden all have bilateral agreements on economic co-operation to ensure that the countries provide each other with vital goods and materials during international crises. Some challenges in relation to cross-border flows and dependencies may be tackled if such arrangements are revamped on a bilateral or trilateral basis. There are also several other agreements and arrangements within different sectors of the Nordic cooperation. In addition, the Nordic countries have the opportunity to make agreements based on the Nordic security agreement to protect classified information exchanged between the countries.

According to the agreements, trade shall continue to the extent possible during a crisis. Therefore, a question to explore further would be in what situations HNS will become relevant in case of supply disruptions.

There is also an ongoing collaboration between Finland, Norway and Sweden on security of supply and critical infrastructure protection. The countries have analysed and mapped the possibilities of deepening the trilateral cooperation to prepare for potential disruptions to cross-border flows of critical goods. Discussion are underway concerning the next steps.¹⁴ Lessons learned from this work could also add value to the Nordic cooperation.

Cooperation on civil-military aspects of HNS – emergencies

Civil-military perspectives to HNS is important in relation to natural disasters where military assets can support civilian efforts. Therefore, civil-military dimensions should be included in all relevant proposals in this section. By including these perspectives early on, this should also pave the way for mutual exchange and deepened cooperation on civil-military HNS in situations of heightened alert or war should be seen as an important next step for the Nordic cooperation. See below.

14. *Critical Nordic Flows: Collaboration between Finland, Norway and Sweden on Security of Supply and Critical Infrastructure Protection*, MSB, 2020.





4.2 Developing cooperation within Host Nation Support – further areas

Current risk and threat assessments aiming at 2030 indicate a world with an increasing number of extreme weather events and other insecurities. The demand for mutual assistance among the Nordic countries and within a wider European context will only increase.

Considering the core importance of HNS as a basis for mutual assistance, there is every reason to maintain cooperation within this area as a key priority also in the period beyond 2024.

Developing efficient structures for HNS builds on a wide range of other preparatory activities providing the preconditions for mutual assistance. Examples of themes for cooperation that could be further developed are presented below.

Further developing robust and secure communications for crises and emergencies

There is a great need for secure communication when exchanging information, especially in connection with operational cooperation during major events. The EU guidelines for HNS underline this need too. Linking the Nordic countries' radio communication systems using TETRA's standardised Inter-System Interface (ISI) functionality, i.e. Norway's Nødnett, Sweden's Rakel and Finland's Virve, enables the effective management of cross-border accidents and other events. Today, the Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish networks are linked to one another.

An important step forward will be the development of a broadband solution for faster and more secure transmission of speech and images, which will eventually replace the current TETRA system.





Cooperation on civil-military aspects of HNS – heightened alert or war

As mentioned above, civilian actors may draw upon military assets to support the management of emergencies. In light of the deteriorated security situation, the question of national defence and civil defence is high on the agenda in all Nordic countries.

Being able to give and receive both military and civil support during situations of heightened alert or war is a central goal in national work on HNS. Hybrid threats and the blurred line between peacetime and wartime events will further reinforce the need for civil-military cooperation on HNS, in the framework of total defence. Cooperation is already established, but increased tensions around the Baltic Sea call for a strengthening of joint initiatives. The possibilities to draw on existing structures on the civilian side (Haga) and those on the military side (NORDEFECO) should be used to develop cooperation ahead.

Removing legal and financial obstacles for HNS

On the basis of the overview of legal and financial preconditions for HNS, proposed above, as well as the further analysis of the Nordred agreement, the Nordic countries should together aim at prioritizing areas where legal and financial obstacles can be removed to assure effective mutual support within the Nordic region.



APPENDIX 1:

Ongoing work with Host Nation Support in the Nordic countries

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Ongoing work with Host Nation Support in the Nordic countries

Sweden

Management of serious incidents and crises

Before Sweden asks for international assistance and HNS becomes necessary, all other possibilities for mobilising capacities nationally should be explored.

At the local level, the municipalities have the geographic responsibility for their areas and should have a capacity for supporting in the planning and management of serious events. The county administrative boards at the regional level can assist municipalities; in particular, in situations in which many municipalities are affected. The governments can assign the county administrative boards the role of prioritising and allocating incoming national and international reinforcement resources.



At the national level, MSB's role is to support coordination and ensure that society uses its resources in an efficient way to manage the crisis at hand. If national resources are insufficient, MSB can channel requests for international assistance. MSB is the national point of contact for the structures within EU (ERCC)¹⁵, NATO (EADRCC)¹⁶ and the UN¹⁷. MSB is required to inform the government about the need for requesting international assistance. MSB can also offer support to the affected county administrative board in establishing a capacity for receiving the requested support from abroad.

MSB has developed a guide to support actors at different levels in preparing for and receiving international support. It contains recommendations on practical questions such as travel arrangements, equipment for the personnel, logistics, communications, transportation as well as roles and responsibilities. The guidelines are generic and can be applied in all HNS-situations in relation to peacetime emergencies. In addition, MSB has developed a specific capacity for Host Nation Support, deploying personnel to provide field support, based on the experiences from the large forest fires in 2018.

Host Nation Support is also a principal goal in the national exercise plan. Other central agencies may also offer support within their areas of responsibility.

Current work on HNS

As the organization of HNS depend on the crisis at hand, MSB is currently developing sector-specific guidance for HNS. MSB has recently concluded guidance on how to manage incoming support by air. Specific rules and procedures apply to airports, all of which needs to be taken into account when organizing HNS for airborne support.

The ambition is to develop guidance also for situations including chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear (CBRN)-situations or large-scale oil-spill. The guidance does not include situations of heightened alert or war.

The civil-military perspective of HNS is important in Sweden. The Swedish Armed Forces and MSB are jointly developing coherent planning for total defence. In this work, six focus areas have been identified one of which is Host Nation Support.¹⁸ Nordic cooperation with Finland is emphasized within total defence, but also with Norway and Denmark.

In 2014, Sweden and NATO signed a MoU on Host Nation Support. The overarching goal is to ensure that the host nation can provide necessary support when receiving military troops in relation to exercises as well as crisis. The Swedish Armed Forces is cooperating with relevant civil actors to implement the MoU. Sweden is one of six countries, including Finland, that has the status as Enhanced Opportunities Partner with NATO.

MSB has started a project aiming at strengthening the capacity to receive both civil and military assistance in times of crises, including during heightened alert.

15. The EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre, ERCC.

16. The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Center, EADRCC.

17. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, OCHA.

18. *Handlingskraft – Handlingsplan för att främja och utveckla en sammanhängande planering för totalförsvaret 2021–2025*, page 22.

Denmark

Management of serious incidents and crises

The municipal council constitute the basis in the Danish crisis preparedness system. It is responsible for managing an incident. Neighbouring municipalities provide the primary support. The national disaster response service, the Danish Emergency Management Agency (BRS), has six national preparedness centres. Through its regional geographic range, BRS can support the municipal response leader for example in extremely highly personnel-intensive responses and/or responses that involve the need for special equipment.

In major incidents, a local preparedness staff is set up with the task of planning the response. The BRS contributes with national resources through its regional preparedness centres. If needed, resources can be allocated between the six regional geographic areas of responsibility upon consultation with the BRS. Gathering more than one local preparedness staff will activate the national operations staff (NOST), in most cases. The affected sectoral competent authorities can report resource shortages and should consider international assistance if the resources prove insufficient. The BRS is the national point of contact for the ERCC.

NOST develops the national situational awareness reports. The BRS can assess the situation and initiate a request for international assistance. For the practical implementation of HNS, the following functions are established in the HNS organisation:

- Communications officers for every foreign assistance unit.
- Reception centres at every harbour/border crossing.
- Coordination support for the local preparedness staff/staffs
 - the OSOCC function (On-Site Operations Coordination Centre).
- HNS cell (authority coordination in BRS situational awareness centre/NOST).

The BRS shall ensure that there are personnel responsible for coordination where necessary, including by the international assistance centres. The liaison personnel will come from the nearest preparedness centre that has not been activated by the incident. Personnel for central and regional coordination will come from the operations offices in the BRS headquarters.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are in place for the central, local and regional levels. The Danish guidelines for response direction describe HNS, addressing the municipalities. HNS-preparedness is an integral part of the national preparedness. There is also an operative guide for liaison officers and staff officers in the HNS organisation.

Current work on HNS

The testing of HNS by means of exercises will continue. The BRS is planning to strengthen the HNS preparedness at the six regional preparedness centres.



Iceland

Management of serious incidents and crises

The Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management (DCPEM) of the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police (NCIP) does not yet have a complete structure in place for HNS. Like other Nordic countries, Iceland is increasing emphasis on reinforcing civil protection and preparedness with various development work, including design and implementation of a legal framework for HNS. Therefore, if a situation requiring international assistance were to arise today, it would have to be managed in accordance with the Icelandic Civil Protection Act (ICPA) no. 82/2008. According to the ICPA it is the NCIP who is responsible for civil protection under the Ministry of Justice and participates on Iceland's behalf in international cooperation with other authorities, including HNS.

Following extreme weather and considerable infrastructure and property damage in December 2019, the Icelandic government decided to accentuate public protection and preparedness. The Government founded a working group tasked with analysing the current situation and if applicable suggesting amendments to important infrastructures. The suggestions of the working group became one of the main foundations for a legislative proposal to change the before mentioned ICPA.

In March and December of 2021, the Minister of Justice presented a proposal to the Icelandic Parliament. One of the most important changes that the proposal entails is a clear legal framework for HNS by prescribing two new provisions to the ICPA. One new provision would authorize the Minister of Justice to issue rules on receiving international support. Another provision would grant the NCIP the authority to request international support, with the approval of the Minister of Justice and in accordance with the relevant international agreements. This would eliminate any doubt that the initiative should come from the ICPA. In March of 2021, the proposal was introduced into the Icelandic Parliament but was not voted on. The Minister of Justice presented the bill again in December 2021 and hopefully the proposal will be adopted as part of ICPA in late spring or beginning of summer 2022.

Another important development is that the Icelandic Government issued a new civil protection policy in March of 2021. The policy is extensive and prescribes Iceland's ambitious goals for strengthening civil protection and preparedness.

Current work on HNS

According to the new civil protection policy, the NCIP will prepare guidelines on HNS in cooperation with other relevant authorities and crisis responders.

When working on the guidelines the group shall take note of the EU, Nordic, UN and WHO guidelines on HNS. The group will analyse whether Icelandic laws and regulations restrict in any way the receiving of international support and if applicable suggest amendments. The guidelines for receiving international support should be ready by the end of 2022. Until then the NCIP will continue to work according to MoU between Iceland and other countries and European and International agreements when Iceland requires support from other countries or assistance is required from Iceland.





Norway

Management of serious incidents and crises

The four main principles for emergency management in Norway also apply when requesting assistance from abroad. The organisation responsible for an area in a normal situation is also responsible for managing extraordinary incidents within that area. The organisation operating during emergencies should remain as similar as possible to the ordinary organisation. Moreover, emergencies should be managed at the lowest possible organisational level.

The municipalities are responsible for developing safe and robust local communities. At the regional level, the county governor will implement the national policy in civil security and preparedness.

The individual cabinet minister is from a constitutional and a parliamentary perspective responsible for his or her own area. There is a dedicated administrative structure for cross-sectoral events based on three parts: A designated lead department, crisis coordination through the Government's crisis council, and the supporting function Crisis Support Unit (CSU).

Norwegian rescue services are based on a cooperation between public authorities, voluntary organisations and private companies. The Joint Rescue Coordination Centres have the overall operational responsibility during search and rescue operations. The operations are coordinated either directly from one of two Joint Rescue Coordination Centres (JRCC) or through one of 13 rescue sub centres. The police district operational centre leads the rescue actions. The public authority responsible for managing an incident has the task of assessing the need for international assistance and the channels through which it is appropriate to send the request.

From 2010, Norway reviewed regulations, analysed existing international framework agreements and other agreements with a view of developing a new national framework for HNS. In 2013, Norway developed new guidelines for HNS in line with international guidelines.

The request for international assistance includes four phases:

Request: When the responsible authority in Norway needs assistance from abroad, it has to make a formal request. In general, the authority submits the request via established routines and channels that are regulated by bilateral or multilateral agreements. DSB has established a national contact point assisting authorities with requests for international assistance. DSB's national contact point is staffed 24/7 and has established fixed lines of communication and procedures with NATO, the EU and the UN.

Reception: All emergency help from abroad that Norway requests is covered by exemptions (visa exemptions, easing of quarantine restrictions, customs rules) from existing legislation in order to make the emergency assistance efficient and effective. Border crossings and customs posts will try to process all emergency assistance entering Norway quickly and smoothly. Special exemptions apply for certain objects. Individual customs posts maintain the same exemptions (docking and landing permission) when assistance is received by air or sea. Support from the Norwegian Civil Defence can be requisitioned via DSB or the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre.

Support: In general, each sector has a well-established channel for requesting assistance from abroad. DSB's contact point should be notified of all international assistance requests in the event of a crisis. The reception and support system must be assessed depending on the situation and the type of assistance that has been requested. The support system must be adapted accordingly, unnecessary obstacles or delays in reception or deployment be avoided. Important HNS functions are centres for reception and departure centre (RDC) responsible for logistics and the registration of incoming personnel and a HNS liaison being a link between the Norwegian authorities and incoming personnel.

There are two key questions when ending HNS-operation: 1) How to deal with purchased equipment and 2) how to organize the response team's departure. The operation ends when the responsible authority concludes that the situation as under control and the international assistance is no longer required. During this phase, the equipment will return if possible. If it stays in Norway, the responsible authority will deal with it.

Current work on HNS

The Norwegian NHS Guidelines is still used in all relevant exercises, making new experiences.



Finland

Management of serious incidents and crises

At the central level, the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for requesting and receiving international support in the area of rescue services. The national legislation (Rescue Services Act, 2011) takes into account the EU HNS guidelines.

The regional rescue services are responsible for rescue operations at their own areas. The rescue director is to be sourced from the rescue area in which the accident or incident occurred, unless otherwise agreed.

The Ministry of the Interior's disaster response authorities have a mandate to give orders in rescue operations. Regional authorities (regional administrative agencies) have no operational role, but rather support the Ministry of the Interior, for example, by providing situational awareness reports. If authorities from several areas of responsibility participate the disaster response operations, the chief of the disaster response operations is the overall leader and is responsible for the updating of the situational awareness and coordination.

The Ministry of the Interior has commenced preparation for presenting and developing HNS measures at the national level. In 2014, a national HNS working group, which included representatives from disaster response agencies and regional public authorities, was formed. The group's work was based on the EU guidelines for Host Nation Support and the new legislation on the EU civil protection mechanism. Moreover, HNS was a component of the Barents Rescue exercise in Finland in 2015.

Current work on HNS

National guidelines on HNS are currently being updated by the Ministry of the Interior. Recently, there was also a project in the Southwest Finland Emergency Services. The project's overall objective was to develop an operating model and a training package for situations when there is a need for international or national assistance. The project ended on June 30, 2021.

The Ministry of the Interior/Department for Rescue Services is currently updating the national risk assessment, expected to be ready in the first part of 2022.

APPENDIX 2:

Nordic cooperation projects and agreements focusing on preparedness

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Nordic cooperation projects and agreements focusing on preparedness

This chapter lists a number of existing collaborations and agreements in which the Nordic countries regulate and cooperate on the issue of how they can assist each other in emergencies and crises. The list is not exhaustive but provides an initial picture of how Nordic cooperation on preparedness looks in a number of sectors.

Nordic cooperation on preventing and meeting forest fires

The Nordic Council of Ministers decided 2019 to deepen Nordic cooperation to prevent and meet forest fires. The cooperation aims to strengthen the region's capacity to support the fight against major forest fires and wildfires in Northern Europe.

Nordred

Nordred is an agreement for cooperation between Nordic rescue services that ranges from the development of rescue services to operational cooperation. The agreement was signed in 1989 between Denmark and Norway. Finland and Sweden joined in 1992, and Iceland in 2001. Through this agreement, the Nordic countries have agreed to assist each other in relation to various risks. The agreement contains regulations concerning assistance across national borders, for example, operational responsibility, the elimination of import and export restrictions, permission to use disaster response equipment, and questions related to liability.

NordBER

There is a Nordic electricity preparedness agreement from 2004. The agreement has two overall aims: 1) Regular information and sharing of experiences between the parties on relevant issues in electricity preparedness: 2) Preparedness planning for the aggregate Nordic electricity sector as an addition to national preparedness. NordBER members include the main grid operators in all of the Nordic countries as well as the Swedish Energy Agency and its Nordic counterparts. The purpose is to develop preparedness planning for the aggregate Nordic electricity supply system.

Nordhels and the Svalbard Group

Within the framework of the Nordic health preparedness collaboration, the Nordic national public health authorities discuss common preparedness challenges. The countries convene annually in the Svalbard Group. The aim of this collaboration is to create a structure for co-operation between the Nordic countries in order to prepare and develop healthcare preparedness

Maritime agreements

There is a range of international multilateral agreements designed to facilitate efforts to reduce emissions and provide mutual assistance and aid in relation to maritime rescue operations. International cooperation is often essential to managing large-scale emissions at sea. There are a number of international agreements and collaborations that regulate how the countries in the Nordic region, and other affected countries, can collaborate to manage emissions at sea. The most important agreements are the Copenhagen Agreement, the Helsinki Agreement (HELCOM) for the Baltic Sea, and the Bonn Agreement for the North Sea. Management of capacities, communications, costs, are among other things regulated within these frameworks.

Nordic agreements in relation to radiation accidents

In 1963, the Nordic countries signed the Nordic Mutual Emergency Assistance Agreement in Connection with Radiation Accidents. There are also bilateral agreements on assistance between the Nordic neighbouring countries. Nordic cooperation is well developed and the countries have important knowledge about each other's capacities and organisation. A system for emergency alerts has been established in the Nordic region and Europe for this type of crisis. The emergency alert chain in the Nordic region is practised regularly, for example, through the common Nordic Emergency Preparedness (NEPEX) exercises. The Swedish Radiation Safety Authority (SSM) regularly invites expert teams from the Nordic countries to participate in major Swedish exercises in the area.

Cooperation between the police authorities

In a declaration of intent signed in 2018, the Nordic justice ministers called for a closer cross-border co-operation between police forces to combat the growing threat of organised crime with focus on the local and regional level in the border areas and facilitating cross-border operations. Allowing police forces to patrol on the other side of borders and to conduct operations along with their colleagues from neighbouring countries are important steps forward.

Nordic cooperation in the area of security and defence

In 2009, the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEF) was established to deepen Nordic defence cooperation. The cooperation encompasses for example, logistics and maintenance, training and exercises, operations and equipment. The cooperation aims to promote the countries' defence capabilities, for example through the joint development and procurement of defence equipment. It also aims to develop capabilities for international military interventions within the framework of the EU, NATO and the UN. Discussions are currently ongoing about how to find links between the Haga-cooperation and NORDEF to pave way for civil-military cooperation.

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Nordic transport cooperation in crisis management

There is a well-developed crisis preparedness cooperation between the national roads authorities on roads and railways in Sweden and Norway.

In 2020, the transport authorities in Finland and Sweden signed a Memorandum of Understanding in order to initiate, enable and deepen cooperation to enhance preparedness within all areas of transport in relation to emergencies as well as crises.

Security of supply and critical infrastructure protection

In 2017, a collaboration between Finland, Norway and Sweden on security of supply and critical infrastructure protection was established. The collaboration resulted in a report, which was published in 2020, which explored 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.

Nordic national CERT communications network

In 2013, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Nordic countries on the supervision and development of the National CERT Cooperation was signed. The MoU constitutes the foundation for the administration and development of cooperation between the Nordic national CERT functions, including the communications network for information sharing. Since 2013, the Nordic countries have established a common communications network for secure information sharing between the national CERT organisations. They have also instituted a permanent CERT collaboration group, the Nordic CERT Cooperation Steering Group (NCC-SG), the purpose of which is to be a steering group for administration and information sharing in the Nordic communications network.

Norwegian-Swedish meteorological cooperation

In March 2014 the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) and the Norwegian Meteorological Institute launched a collaboration. Under this collaboration, the institutes will jointly develop a model of weather forecasting intended for forecast production and will fund an increasing need for resource-demanding forecast calculations for the Nordic region. Through this collaboration, affected actors will obtain even better assessments of local effects of extreme weather situations. The collaboration will also strengthen preparedness for a crisis situation, since the institutes can serve as back-up for each other.

In 2017, SMHI and the Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI) began working together to build a new collaboration on the mapping of sea ice in the Baltic Sea. The first joint ice map was published the same year.

A collaboration between



Swedish Civil
Contingencies
Agency



Ministry of the Interior
Finland



Norwegian
Directorate for
Civil Protection



**DANISH EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT AGENCY**



Government of Iceland
Ministry of Justice