

News

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Call for joint Nordic sanctions against countries behind cyber attacks

Editorial

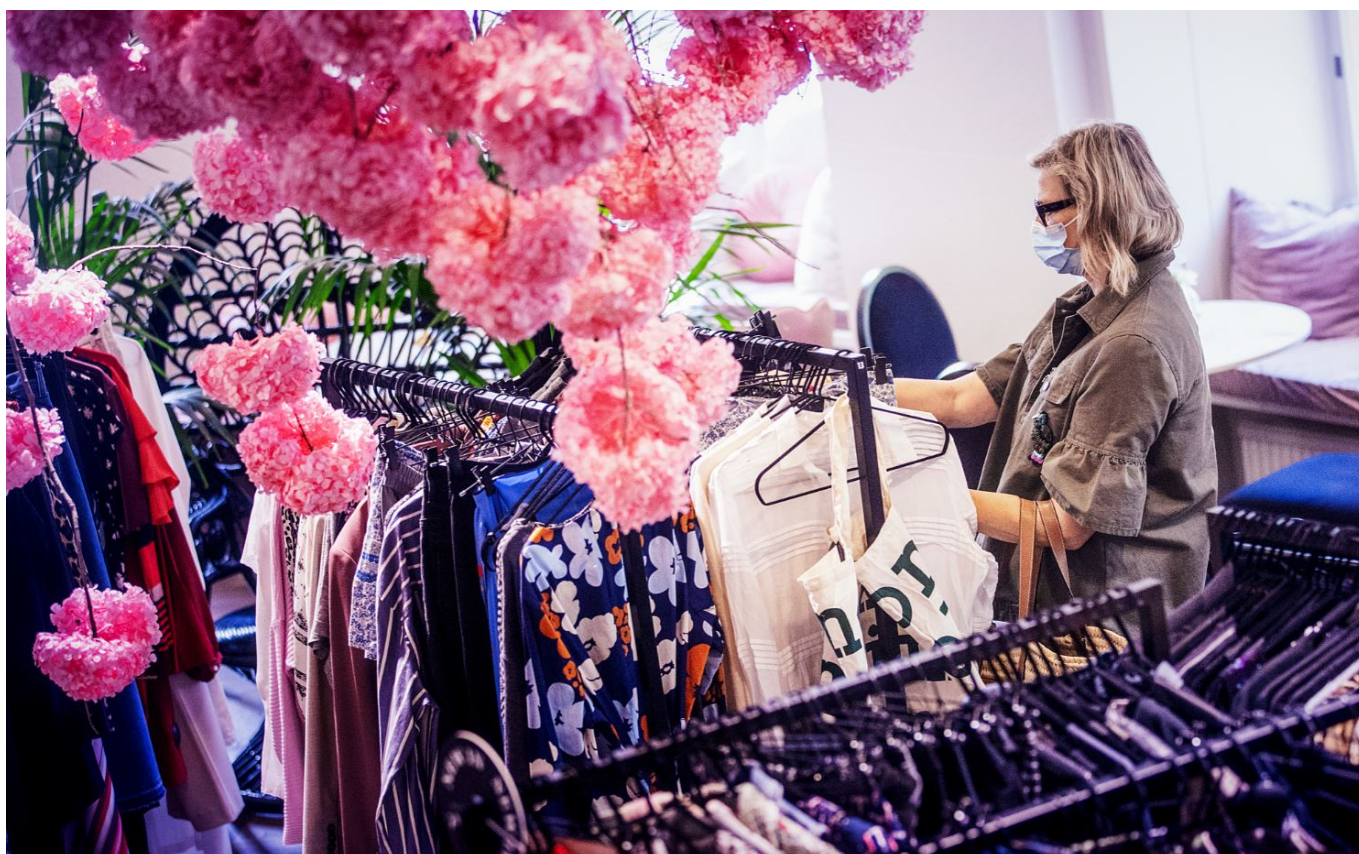
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Jun 29, 2021

Theme: Back to normal?



Newsletter from the Nordic Labour Journal 6/2021



Financed by
Nordic Council of
Ministers

NORDIC LABOUR JOURNAL

Work Research Institute
OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University,
Postboks 4 St. Olavs plass, NO-0130
Oslo

PUBLISHER

Work Research Institute, OsloMet
commissioned by the Nordic Council of
Ministers.

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An email edition of the newsletter can
be ordered free of charge from
www.nordiclabourjournal.org

ISSN 1504-9019 tildelt: Nordic labour
journal (online)



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Is the Nordic cooperation more fragile than we thought?

As the Corona pandemic hit in early 2020, there was a brutal and global stock market crash, unemployment skyrocketed in many countries and air traffic more or less came to a halt.

EDITORIAL

29.06.2021

BY BJÖRN LINDAHL, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As the pandemic is easing, the way back is more varied. More and more borders are opening up and those of us who have been able to work from home are slowly returning to our offices. People in healthcare can breathe out. The media has time for other stories, and the political standstill is coming to an end – and we see a Swedish government crisis where a prime minister for the first time has to step down after losing a vote of no confidence.

Norway's capital saw a similar upset. The governing red-green alliance stepped down after a vote of no confidence against the city councillor for the environment Lan Marie Berg – one of Norway's highest-profile politicians. She will now run for parliament in September instead. Iceland also has parliamentary elections this autumn. It looks like Nordic politics might become a bit more turbulent than what has been the case for the past 18 months.

The history of the Corona pandemic will be written eventually. We describe it through the stories of how a company, a food hall and a church have been hit in the Swedish city of Höganäs. The three women interviewed by Fayme Alm share one aim in life: You have to offer good service.

Going forward, our everyday lives will be filled with less existential questions – like what should we wear on our return to the office? Bengt Östling and Cata Portin have performed a deep dive into the Finnish fashion industry. In Åland the party is already well underway – they will spend an entire year celebrating 100 years of autonomy.

That does not mean this edition is all glitter. We also report on the Danish Benefit Commission's work to reform the state's cash benefit system, partly to be able to prioritise children of unemployed parents. And what is happening to the law about employee protection in Sweden? A compromise had been reached only weeks before the government crisis.

It is not often we can claim to take a billion-year perspective on things, but our new colleague in Iceland, Hallgrímur Indriðason, presents NordVulk – one of the oldest Nordic institutions that are facing a less certain financial future while the ongoing Geldingadalir eruption serves as a reminder of the powerful forces inside our planet. A few years ago, the whole of Europe was affected by the ash cloud from Iceland. But volcanology is also knowledge about how climate gases can be stored in rock, which is important if we are to reach our goal of a climate-neutral economy.

Far too often we concentrate on facing the dangers we are already fighting. During the Nordic Council Theme Session a new threat will be debated – cyber attacks. Can we coordinate a Nordic approach for how to fight them?

We also need a comprehensive debate about the Nordic cooperation. As Nordregio's leader Rolf Rolf Elmér put it in Gunhild Wallin's interview:

“It was surprisingly easy to close the borders, I thought the open borders were better protected than that. But when the pandemic arrived, much of the cooperation proved to be a ‘fair weather’ construction that could not withstand the stress of a pandemic.”

We wish all our readers a good read and a good summer!

Will Sweden's new Employment Act fall foul of government crisis?

In early June the Swedish government presented its contribution to a reform of the Employment Act and added 11 billion kronor a year to cover retraining and studies. Then the government crisis happened and the question now is what will become of the difficult labour protection issue.

NEWS

29.06.2021

TEXT: GUNHILD WALLIN

"The proposals have very broad parliamentary support. So I don't think we will see an immediate effect," Irene Wennemo told the Arbetet newspaper when asked what the government crisis might mean for the reform of the Labour Protection Act (LAS).

Wennemo is the Director-General of the National Mediation Office and was previously a state secretary for the Social Democrats. In her interview with Arbetet, which is published by Swedish Trade Union Confederation, she reckons the proposed LAS reform can be postponed due to the government crisis but she does not believe it can be stopped. Right now it is also in its third round of consultations, which will come to an end on 15 September. That means the touchy issue of the shape of a future Employment Act right now is not up for discussion on a government level.

When the government crisis was a fact, it was less than three weeks since Eva Nordmark together with the Center Party and the Liberals presented the result of three departmental reports which had been commissioned after the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, the Confederation of Professional Employees PTK, the trade unions Kommunal and IF-Metall presented their joint agreement on LAS and change last autumn. On 7 June it was the government's turn to present its contribution.

"This is the largest reform of the Swedish labour market in modern times," said Minister for Employment Eva Nordmark as she presented the new proposal.

More people can be made exempt from 'last in, first out'

The proposal is the contribution from the government and its supporters in parliament to the tortuous and complicated journey towards changing the Labour Protection Act, LAS. Simply put, it would mean that employers can make three

rather than two people exempt from the 'last in, first out' principle during labour shortages, regardless of a company's size.

If an employee misbehaves or is not suitable for the job, it has so far been possible to fire him or her on "reasonable grounds". This will now be replaced by reasonable or personal reasons and the employment is terminated by making the person redundant even if a grievance is in motion.

Previously, the worker's salary would still be paid for as long as the grievance was active, which has come in for criticism from employers who felt it was too expensive to fire employees.

Martin Ådahl from the Centre Party told a press conference on 7 June that it would be easier and cheaper for employers to "do the right thing". If a decision of redundancy has been taken on the wrong basis, however, the employer can be made to pay compensation. According to the proposal, it will become more expensive "to make mistakes". So far the new wording fulfils the wishes of the employers.

Better chance to study

The employees gain an advantage through a completely new drive to improve retraining and opportunities to study both for the worker who has lost their job, but also for workers who want to improve their skills during their working lives. Another positive change for employees is that they would gain a better chance of securing a permanent job compared to today's situation.

"We want to strengthen the companies' need for flexibility, but also the security of employees. Our proposal gives all wage earners better further education and the chance to train while receiving 80% of their wages for one year," Eva Nord-

mark said in an interview with Swedish Radio on the day the proposal was presented.

Eva Nordmark refers to the big changes the labour market is going through right now, and that it is therefore right to make changes to the employment act. Security is linked to permanent employment, but the ability to secure skills in an ever-changing labour market represents security too, she points out.

“We want to see greater mobility in the labour market because we have a matching problem. Employers struggle to find people with the right skills, and meanwhile we have a group of people who are far outside the labour market. If we can use skills development to fill the empty spaces with the employees that the employers seek, we get new spaces to fill,” Eva Nordmark told Swedish Radio.

Changing the Employment Act has been a complicated process. The issue arose in the so-called January agreement when the Centre Party and the Liberals demanded a change to LAS, as one of their main demands, in order to give their support to the Social Democrat government. LAS has been a thorn in the side of the centre-right parties and employers more or less since it was introduced in the mid-1970s. Time and again, employers have pointed out that they need more freedom to fire people.

In the January agreement, the parties agreed to launch an enquiry into the Employment Act. If they could not agree on any change, proposed legislation would be put forward. So the January agreement actually contained a threat of legislation when it came to the Employment Act.

Last autumn, the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, the Confederation of Professional Employees PTK, the trade unions Kommunal and IF-Metall agreed on how LAS should be changed and on increased retraining opportunities. Twelve LO unions voted no to the agreement because they felt the changes to the Employment Act were too far-reaching.

Inspired by Finland

Eva Nordmark describes the government's and the supporting parties' proposal as a well-balanced product. On the other hand, many of the LO unions that rejected the agreement think there is a risk that employees end up with A and B teams when it comes to the retraining agreement which already exists. The trade unions also fear that IF-Metall and Kommunal will benefit from being part of the agreement, while terms will be less favourable for those on the outside.

The government's proposal for retraining and education has been inspired by Finland, a country that has served as a model for the reform. In that country, it is mostly public sector employees who have chosen to study. 75% of them are women and half are between 30 and 39. One argument put forward by LO unions opposing the agreement is that older

male workers become less secure without really gaining anything that suits them.

Critics also claim the reform will solidify class – those who perhaps would have been prepared to study regardless of the reform now get economic support to do so, while the reform does not reach the others.

The consultation round lasts until 15 September and the reform is expected to be executed next summer.



Cash benefit reform to fight child poverty in Denmark

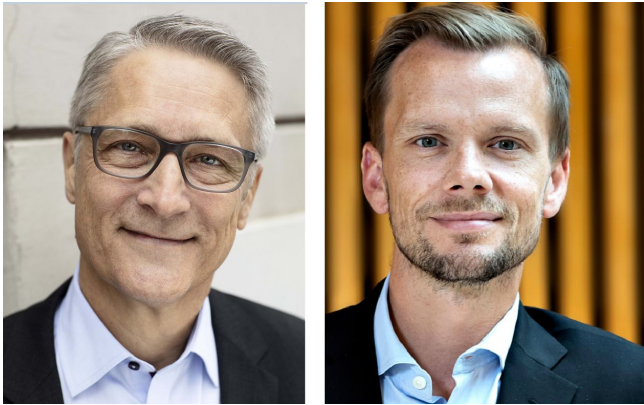
The safety net for Denmark's poorest – cash benefits – should be completely reformed, argues a government commission. It proposes support for leisure activities for children in poor families and the opportunity for people to do some work without losing access to cash benefits.

NEWS

29.06.2021

TEXT: MARIE PREISLER, ILLUSTRATION PHOTO: MARTIN ZACHRISSON/NORDEN.ORG

Lifting 4,000 - 6,000 Danish children out of poverty and helping children of parents on cash benefits to buy a computer, pay the football club contingent, go on holiday or to summer camp. That could be the result if the Danish government secures a majority to reform the cash benefit system in line with recommendations from the Benefit Commission, which has spent six months preparing them.



Torben Tranæs, Chair of the Benefit Commission and Peter Hummelgaard, Minister of Employment. Photo: Vive, Keld Navntof.

“Our recommendations secure fairer conditions for children whose parents are on cash benefits, and consequently more equality for all children in Denmark,” said the Commission chair Torben Tranæs when presenting the recommendations on 31 May 2021.

More money for families with children

Central to the recommendations is that families on cash benefits should be able to afford leisure and club activities for their children in line with what other children enjoy, explained Tranæs. The Commission wants to secure this by introducing targeted support worth 450 Danish kroner (€60) a month per child. Families on cash benefits can apply for this from their municipality. The benefit would be capped at four children per family.

The Commission also recommends a comprehensive economic redistribution between different groups who receive cash benefits – single people and those without children should, as a group, receive less and families with children should receive more.

The government gave the Commission a clear task: Propose changes to the cash benefit system and simplify it, solve Denmark’s child poverty problem and get more cash benefit claimants into work. And the changes must not lead to an increase in total cash benefit expenditure.

Better overview

Cash benefit is an umbrella term covering a range of benefits which represent a safety net for Danes who are not economically self-sufficient and who are neither in work, education or able to draw a pension. It is a very mixed group and many face challenges beyond being unemployed. There are many vulnerable young people, some with mental health problems, and people with non-western backgrounds are over-represented.

The proposed new assessment model will make the cash benefit system far simpler than the current one, which has been expanded so many times that it has turned into what Torben

Tranæs calls “a range of curiosities”. He believes citizens, civil servants and politicians have all “lost overview” over how the system works and whether it does what it should.

The future model for cash benefits should be much easier to understand, with far clearer incentives to find work or training. The new system would have a base level for all plus a higher level and some add-ons. In order to qualify for the higher benefit level, you need to have done some training, have had a job and have lived long enough in Denmark.

An incentive to find work and training

The Commission proposes two paths to earning the right to the higher benefit level.

- You have to be 25 or older, completed professional skills training or two and a half years of ordinary work in the past ten years and you have to have lived in Denmark for seven of the past eight years since turning 18.
- You have to be over 30, having finished basic education or FGU (Preparatory basic education) and you have to have lived in the country for 12 of the past 13 years since turning 18.

This will impact on many refugees’ and immigrants’ opportunities to secure the higher benefit rate. Some will get more cash benefit, others less than they get today.

It has also been important for the Commission to find out how to remove the so far 29 different limits to how much people can be paid in cash benefits, while retaining the limits’ intended aim: to make sure cash benefit recipients do not receive unlimited public benefits. The new system will help solve this too while creating more security, said Torben Tranæs during his presentation.

“The proposed new system is a simple construction which will create economic security for people, allowing them to focus on looking after themselves. And in this new system, we no longer need cash benefit ceilings.”

Finally, the Commission wants to allow claimants to work up to eight hours a week without losing any cash benefits. This would allow people who get the lowest basic benefit (6,600 Danish kroner or €890) to improve their living standard by working for a few hours while also building up to be eligible for the higher benefit level.

Foreigners should not get more

Minister of Employment Peter Hummelgaard (Social Democrats) hopes for a broad political agreement on a new cash benefit system and points to three pillars for negotiation:

“First of all, there should be an economic incentive to find work. Cash benefit is a temporary benefit, and its size should mirror this. Second, children in Denmark should grow up in decent conditions and have the opportunity to be an active part of society.

"And finally, the benefit must not lead to an increase in immigration to Denmark. The government's position remains what it was before the election – we do not want to increase benefits for foreigners. And there should still be an element of earning the benefit, preventing people from drawing benefits from day one.

The minister also points out that a new cash benefit system should support the government's upcoming proposal for 37 obligatory working hours for newly arrived foreigners and others who still need help to integrate.

Several observers predict difficult negotiations for a reformed cash benefit system.

Post-Corona recovery more uneven than the crisis itself

How are the Nordic labour markets doing as the Corona pandemic is hopefully coming to an end? Will it be followed by a strong recovery or will companies that have been kept going with state support now face closure?

ANALYSIS

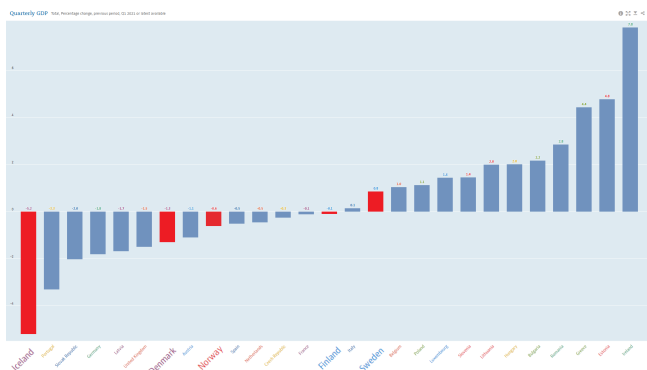
29.06.2021

TEXT: BJÖRN LINDAHL

Economic crises usually hit fast and wide, while recoveries and economic booms are more unevenly divided.

This is easy to see in the OECD's statistics for GDP in this year's first quarter. Iceland and Ireland are at each end of the scale, for instance. Iceland's GDP did worse than any other European country's and had fallen 5.2%. Ireland has taken the lead among the countries that are on their way out of the economic crisis. The country saw solid GDP growth of 7.8% in Q1.

The gap between Iceland and Ireland is 13 percentage points. Sweden and Finland are – just about – in the group of countries with GDP growth in Q1, while it has fallen in both Denmark and Norway.



The Nordic countries are marked red in the graph showing GDP development in the EU, Iceland, Norway and the UK in Q1 2021. Iceland saw the biggest fall while Ireland (to the right) saw the greatest GDP growth. Source: OECD.

A lot can have happened in the second quarter, however. Iceland has done badly because of its dependency on tourism, while Ireland has benefited from the fact that many multinationals have their European headquarters in the country.

Companies like Google, Amazon and Facebook have done well during the crisis.

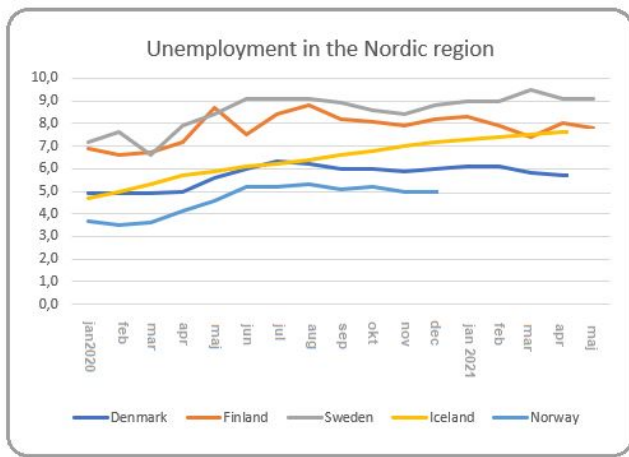
But the OECD warns:

"Prospects for the world economy have brightened but this is no ordinary recovery. It is likely to remain uneven and dependent on the effectiveness of vaccination programmes and public health policies. Some countries are recovering much faster than others. Korea and the United States are reaching pre-pandemic per capita income levels after about 18 months. Much of Europe is expected to take nearly three years to recover."

If you look at the labour markets, the picture is somewhat different. Staying in the Nordics, Denmark has seen strong employment growth three months in a row. Unemployment was only 0.5%, or 14,000 people, higher than in February 2020 – the last month before the Corona crisis hit.

Developments in Denmark are happily embraced by the Danish Minister of Employment Peter Hummelgaard:

"This once again confirms our expectations that companies are ready to welcome back workers in step with the gradual re-opening of society. This also shows that our choice to help companies so that they could maintain their workforce through furlough-schemes has paid off."



Unemployment in percentage of the labour force over the past 17 months according to Eurostat. Norway reports quarterly figures and Denmark and Iceland are one month after Finland and Sweden. That is why these countries' graphs are shorter. Source: labour force surveys from all the countries.

At 5% for Q1, Norway's unemployment rate is one percentage point below Denmark's and the lowest of the Nordics. For Q1 2020 it was 3.6%.

84,000 Norwegian jobs disappeared during the pandemic according to Statistics Norway. Since not all jobs are full-time, this corresponds to 62,000 fewer people in work in Q1 2021 compared to the same time last year. Nearly one in four of these jobs belonged to people working but not living permanently in Norway.

Due to Norway's strong pandemic immigration restrictions, foreign workers have lost their opportunity to work in the country. This is particularly true for the hospitality sector, where one in three jobs have disappeared.

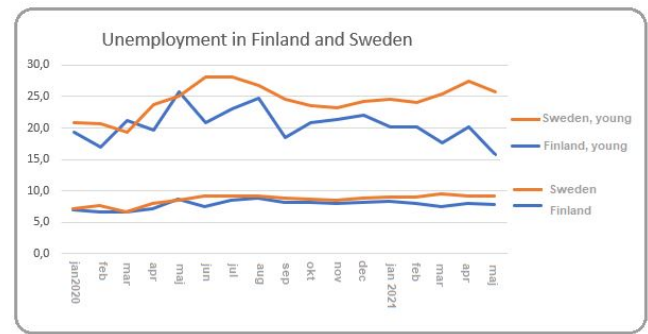
In Iceland, unemployment has continued to climb since the pandemic hit. But while the economy has struggled, the country has been very successful in fighting the Coronavirus. On 26 June all restrictions were lifted and 87% of the adult population have now had their first vaccine.

The Minister of Health Svandís Svavarsdóttir told a press conference this has been a unique decision. No other European country has been able to lift all restrictions like this. She praised Icelanders' willingness to be vaccinated and for having followed restrictions that have severely limited their personal freedoms.

Finland and Sweden already had higher unemployment figures than the rest of the Nordics before the pandemic.

If you look at the total unemployment figures for those aged 25 to 74 there is no major difference between the two countries. In February 2020, one month before the pandemic hit the two countries, unemployment stood at 6.6% in Fin-

land and 7.6% in Sweden. The difference was one percentage point.



The graph shows unemployment for the adult labour force in Finland and Sweden as well as that for people aged 15 to 24. Source: Eurostat.

Later, unemployment rose in both countries. Finland reached its peak in August 2020 with 8.8% while Sweden peaked at 10% in March 2021. In May this year, unemployment in Finland stood at 7.8% and in Sweden it was 9.1%. The difference is still only 1.3 percentage points.

Youth unemployment, defined by Eurostat as people aged 15 to 24, was 19.3% for Finland and 20.9% for Sweden in January 2020. The difference was 1.6 percentage points.

It then rose towards the end of that year to 22.1% in Finland before falling back to 15.7% in May 2021. In Sweden, however, youth unemployment continued rising to a peak of 27.4% in April and fell to 25.8% in May – making the gap to Finland a full 10.1 percentage points.

Eurostat's definition of youth (15 to 24) is often said not to fit the Swedish situation, where that age group is often in education. It is nevertheless interesting to explore why the figures differ so much for this group between Finland and Sweden.



Nordic cooperation – a must-have or nice-to-have?

The pandemic has led to increased polarization between the Nordic countries and trust between Nordic citizens has fallen. This is particularly true for those living far apart. In border regions, where people know each other, it has been less damaged.

THEME

29.06.2021

TEXT: GUNHILD WALLIN, PHOTO: TORSTEIN BØE, SCANPIX

As the Coronavirus hit the world, Nordic borders were shut for the first time since 1954. Suddenly free movement in what is known as the world's most integrated region disappeared and worst hit were the border regions. All the countries chose different paths to stop the virus and from one day to the next the much valued Nordic cooperation seemed to disappear.

“It was surprisingly easy to close the borders, I thought the open borders were better protected than that. But when the

pandemic arrived, much of the cooperation proved to be a ‘fair weather’ construction that could not withstand the stress of a pandemic.



Rolf Elmér became Director of Nordregio in February this year. Photo: Nordregio

“The very foundation – free movement, no passports and integrated border regions – suddenly disappeared. This is an existential crisis for Nordic cooperation, but it can also be useful,” says Rolf Elmér, Director of Nordregio.

The Nordregio research institute was founded by the Nordic Council of Ministers and is situated in Stockholm. Their research focuses on governance models, regional development, demography and city and rural development. The institute cooperates with researchers at well-known universities in all of the Nordic countries and elsewhere in Europe.

Rolf Elmér has in the past worked on labour market issues and business development at the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise and for private companies. He has also been a researcher and saw Nordregio as an opportunity to combine his areas of expertise and help society.

Focus on the effects of the pandemic

Rolf Elmér started working at Nordregio in the middle of the pandemic and has already seen the results of a range of research projects highlighting the effects of Covid 19. This will also be the central theme for the annual “State of the Nordic region” report, due in early 2022.

One of the observable effects is a drop in trust between the Nordic countries, but also between their citizens. Words like “Corona shame”, criticism of neighbouring countries’ anti-infection strategies and sharp words in social media have become ever more common.

“This is a sad and unfortunate development and a consequence of each country doing their own thing. After all, the conflict is not between people, but between the pandemic and people,” says Rolf Elmér.

Things have been more nuanced in the border regions, where people have been trying their very best to maintain the decades-old channels of cooperation and the interwoven

structures which have been developed over many years, benefiting service industries, businesses, labour markets and social life.

The border cooperation with its close bonds and free flow of goods, services and people is seen as the very symbol of what is desired from the Nordic cooperation. Border municipalities and regions have traditionally also been very free to promote integration.

This suddenly came to an end with national disease control action. Borders were closed and guarded by military personnel. Vast border shopping centres and parking spaces suddenly emptied and cross-border commuters could not travel from their home to their place of work because these were in separate countries.

A top-down policy

In the fresh report “Closed borders and divided communities: status report and lessons from Covid 19 in cross-border areas”,

. They have studied the nature of the border cooperation as well as its role in the Nordic cooperation. When the borders closed, jobs disappeared but people were also impacted on a deeper level.



Researchers Mari Wøien Meijer and Alberto Giacometti and have looked at the impact of closed borders on the Haparanda-Tornio and Svinesund border regions. Photo: Nordregio.

Much was done on both sides of the border to maintain the cooperation, and there was also coordinated efforts to influence national decisions for how strict border closures should be. After a while, controls on the Swedish-Finnish border were eased, but this took much longer in the Swedish-Norwegian border regions.

“National authorities’ pandemic response has in many ways been marked by a top-down policy, where regional and local authorities along the borders have been ignored,” write researchers Alberto Giacometti and Marie Wøien Meijer in their report.

“In border regions and border municipalities with many communication channels, trust has been maintained during the crisis and there have been attempts at finding regional and local solutions to maintain cooperation. Together, the local players have informed national decision-makers about local challenges created by national decisions. The closer you are, the better cooperation has worked across borders,” sums up Rolf Elmér.

The pandemic exposes structural inequalities

The pandemic has also exposed structural inequalities in the Nordic countries. Immigrants have been harder hit by infections, also deadly ones. Many have front-line jobs where they are more exposed to the virus.

The pandemic also hits people in low-education jobs harder. Many so-called simple jobs that are considered to be stepping stones into the labour market have disappeared – especially in the tourism and hospitality industries. In Sweden, people born abroad have been hardest hit, and the same has happened in Iceland, where the so-called wellbeing economy has come to a complete halt.

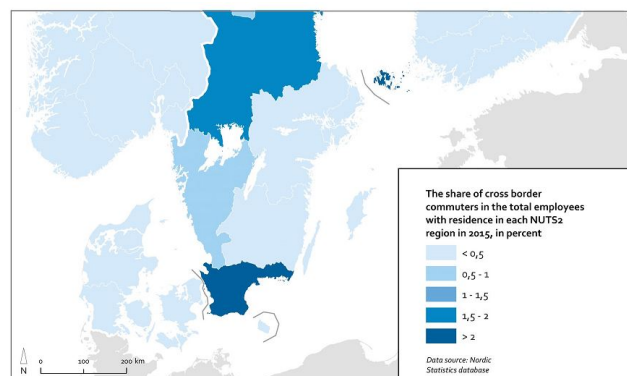
Fixing these structural inequalities will be one of the post-pandemic challenges, believes Rolf Elmér, along with restarting the free flow of labour, which has also nearly come to a halt during the pandemic.

Safeguarding integration

Rolf Elmér acknowledges that there are a range of post-pandemic challenges, both for the Nordic labour market and the Nordic cooperation.

“It will be challenging to maintain the Nordics as an integrated region after the pandemic, and different places and sectors face different challenges. It has been a horrible time with many infected and dead, but now we must learn from experiences and each other,” says Rolf Elmér.

He also wants to point out that many positive things have emerged despite this difficult time, not least the various digital solutions which make it easier for people to communicate no matter where they might be. Another good sign is how border regions have strived to cooperate despite closed borders and many other obstacles. It is also positive that people have changed their attitudes to remote working.



Nordregio's maps visualise what is happening on a regional level. This map shows which parts of the Nordic region have more than two percent of its labour force working in a different country. Visualisation: Shinan Wang, Nordregio

“If we make the most of these experience, it might lead to more sustainable ways of working and it might also create rural development. We might get a new green direction which delivers better quality of life while being good for the environment,” says Rolf Elmér.

To make this happen he believes it will be necessary to change current labour market legislation which is built on traditional ways of working, with a distinct separation of home and work. His vision is that people should be able to work remotely from anywhere in the Nordics for long periods of time, which would also cut the need for transport.

The importance of learning from each other

Rolf Elmér hopes the Nordic cooperation will be re-ignited and that we will be open to learning from each other's experiences from the pandemic. Research carried out by Nordregio could play an important role in this. Groups of researchers and experts from across the Nordics could explore and highlight important issues.

“We have a unique opportunity to deliver relevant knowledge to authorities and government ministries. We can provide experiences and direct information about what is happening in the different Nordic regions,” says Rolf Elmér, who also underlines the importance of spreading research results so that they can be used by others.

Another way of repairing trust is to continue educational and cultural exchanges.

Alberto Giacometti and Marie Wøien Meijer write that the pandemic has highlighted weaknesses in the Nordic cooperation and that we are now at a crossroads.

“Which way we chose depends on the Nordic countries' willingness to make use of the Nordic cooperation platforms more strategically – to decide whether these are ‘must-have’ or a ‘nice-to-have’.”

“It is important not only to look at your own experiences but also those of others. That is a ‘must-have’,” says Rolf Elmér.



Three Swedish stories of service during the pandemic

To be of service. A task with varying content depending on the business. A common thread these days: How to best get through the pandemic. In Höganäs is happened on a local as well as on an international level.

THEME

29.06.2021

TEXT: FAYME ALM, PHOTO: LI FERNSTEDT

Flexibility became a keyword once the Corona pandemic hit. There were new demands for strategic change and digital communications. Some businesses succeeded, others did less well.

The company, the destination and the human being

The Nordic Labour Journal went to north-western Skåne and Höganäs. The city is also the centre of the municipality of the same name. It lies on the Kulla Peninsula, overlooking the northern side of Danish Zealand. A growing municipality with just over 27,000 inhabitants, it is known in the Nordics for its ceramics and beautiful nature which draws many tourists.

We met representatives for three different businesses to find out how they have handled the pandemic and moved on:

- The head of HR at the international company Höganäs, which has planned for the worst and hoped for the best in country after country.
- The former owner of the Höganäs Saluhall (market hall) that had made the city a destination for many travellers before it had to file for bankruptcy.
- The deacon from the Church of Sweden, who had to look for other ways of having one-on-one conversations when the room in the parish hall was closed to visitors. It is her job to be of service – which is what links these three, although they operate in slightly different ways.

We got to witness the measures taken to keep the business running as the pandemic brought infection and disease, risks of furloughs and redundancies, losses and bankruptcies. And we learned how two of the businesses felt restrictions in Swe-

den were far too general and not tailored to their different needs and abilities.

We met people willing to fight, change and cooperate and we met patience. There is also a strong desire to carry on working – albeit in different ways than people had planned.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMPANY



“Höganäs AB has managed to keep production going more or less continuously during the pandemic, but our sales have been severely hit by the closure of car and manufacturing businesses. There was a dramatic fall in orders particularly in the first quarter of 2020,” says Lena Nordberg, the company’s HR chief.

This led to furloughs and the cancelling of summer jobs that year. Production also closed for one month.

This year none of this has been necessary. All furloughed staff are back in full employment and summer jobs are being filled.

From coal to powder

Höganäs AB is a company with a long history. It originates in the mining industry that sprang up in what was a fishing village in 1797. As the market for coal shrank, clay went from being a byproduct to becoming the main product.

A brickyard was created in the 1820s and soon after production of lead-glazed pottery began. Then came the brown salt-glazed jars, like the one Karlsson in Strindberg’s novel *The People of Hemsö* carried around his neck as he steps ashore on the island and starts a string of events with dire consequences.

A billion kronor industry

Today, Höganäs AB manufactures iron and other metal powders. Its head offices are in Höganäs where more than half of production also takes place. The company employs some 2,400 people and its website can be read in six different languages. Last year’s turnover was 8.6 billion Swedish kronor (€855m).

“From the very beginning of the Coronavirus outbreak we had two parallel aims,” says Lena Nordberg.

“To safeguard our employees’ health and to safeguard operations. This has been and continues to be our main priorities.”

When the Coronavirus outbreak in China became public, the company started planning for a possible spread in Europe and elsewhere in the world. All parts of the company were provided with a global checklist detailing routines for how to trace people with symptoms, the procurement of hand sanitiser and face masks, hygiene and more. Local Corona teams were also set up at all of the company’s sites in 15 countries across four continents, explains Lena Nordberg.

“We even defined four phases in order to be able to assess which phase the respective countries were in so that we could get an overview of global measures when infection rates were different in different parts of the world. Europe went in when China got out.”



Lena Nordberg, HR chief at Höganäs. Photo: Höganäs.

The checklist has been expanded in step with new knowledge about the pandemic. Meanwhile, a global Corona team has made sure safety routines have been in place in all the countries where the company operates.

“This work is carried out within a global framework where safety routines are adapted to local variations. Beyond this, we have followed the rule in all countries that anyone who can work from home should do so. We remove as many people as possible from the plants and keep only those who are really needed there.

“We also cut all travel at an early stage. This has worked well not only internally but also with our clients. We have taken a big step forward here and gained experiences which will be useful going forward.”

To be on the safe side, a range of measures were also planned should the virus hit. The company simply chose to be proactive, which turned out to be a good strategy.

“In the beginning, we could of course have been thinking that all this is unnecessary, but we realised that if infection hit our plants we would not have time to write any strategies for safety routines and learn them. So we prepared for the worst and hoped for the best,” says the HR chief.

Endurance put to the test

Although many countries are now vaccinating, the pandemic is not over. Patience is needed and people must continue to take precautions and follow routines. Reminders are therefore necessary, says Lena Nordberg.

Another challenge is the forced isolation that can result from working from home, impacting on employees’ engagement and mental health.

“We have tried to coach our managers to have a presence and for instance check in digitally with employees. Like taking a few minutes to have a cup of coffee together and check what is on the agenda for that day or that week. Managers have also been given guidelines for how to keep cooperation within the team going and my impression is that they have become good at this,” says Lena Nordberg.

Two surveys among employees in Sweden last year and this year show measures that the company leadership has put in place have to a great extent worked. Employees also feel the physical work environment and technology works even better now than last year, which indicates that they have got used to working from home and have learned how to use the new technology.

“A pandemic teaches us many things and it is hard, but it has also given us positive lessons. Like other crises, this has brought us closer together and strengthened our cooperation. Solidarity between the different countries has also been strengthened.”

Solidarity

A friend in need is a friend indeed. During the pandemic, there has been an exchange of goods and services both internally and externally. At the Höganäs plant, old plastic foils were found and given to the Helsingborg hospital where they were turned into face shields.

Höganäs AB in Shanghai donated face masks to the Örebro hospital during a time when these were hard to come by in Europe. This happened with the help of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai.



Höganäs has activities in 15 countries on four continents. Here is a picture from Höganäs Japan. Photo: Höganäs AB.

Yet another example is from this year, when a hospital in Indian Ahmednagar received 60 beds, hand sanitiser and face masks.

And before the infection spread to Brazil, the plant there donated face masks both to Germany and Belgium.

Global plan

The HR chief is now going through safety procedures for the different countries. Her task is to find out how the company can return to a close to normal situation around the world, where employees can work in offices and meet each other.

“We have followed social developments in each individual country and have seen that infections within our company primarily happened outside of the workplace, so we can confidently say we have been good at protecting our staff and our plants. When things are now improving, there is time for reflection,” says Lena Nordberg.

THE DESTINATION



“A man rang from Umeå to book a table for 12 people. When I said that Saluhallen was closed he nearly started crying.”

It was Eva Dahlberg who took the call from southern Norrland. It was also she, together with her husband David Mill, who realised their idea in August of 2012 when they opened the doors to the new Höganäs Saluhallen. Here, visitors could have a snack and shop locally sourced food and goods. The place even got its own restaurant after a while.

The telephone conversation and the many long-term customers showed that the Saluhallen owners had succeeded in creating what most cities desire – a destination for visitors from near and far.

“One merry-go-round does not make a fairground, but when Saluhallen had 300 paying lunch guests, others set up shop in its vicinity. There were potters, artist, a photographer and different shops,” says Eva Dahlberg.

So when the place had to file for bankruptcy in January this year, it was a great disappointment for many people.

Direct from the hub

The idea to serve and sell food was not new for the couple. Eva Dahlberg had been the head of Grand Hôtel in Mölle since 1998, the fishing village just north from Höganäs which used to be known as a puddle of sin around the turn of the 20th century, where women and men went to swim in the sea – although they were wearing stripy swimsuits.

“We could serve locally produced food straight from the food hub that the Kulla Peninsula is. But we couldn’t sell it, and this triggered my husband and two of our staff. In 2004 we began travelling around in the area, knocking on farmers’ doors asking them what they grew and whether they were interested in having their goods sold in a shop in Mölle,” says Eva Dahlberg.



Eva Dahlberg, who ran the restaurant in Saluhallen in Höganäs with her husband.

Several of them answered yes, and the rumour spread. After a few years, the four partners could sell local produce from farms no further than 10 kilometres away.

“We had many lovely customers who shopped here, but the business did not turn any profit. At the end of 2006 we closed the shop,” says Eva Dahlberg.

Saluhallen – a symbiosis of food and drink

While the shop shut, it would turn out that the idea lived on. On a rainy November day in 2011, Eva and her husband agreed they should open a new food hub where customers could both eat and shop. They looked around for opportunities on the Kulla Peninsula and elsewhere, but soon realised they needed a location with soul, explains Eva Dahlberg.

“You can create history, but creating history with a soul takes many years. You need some sort of storytelling in order to really succeed.”

When the opportunity arose to hire space in the building where salt-glazed pottery used to be fired, they had found their space with both soul and history.

“We started building, fixing and pottering about without any architectural plans nor a business model. Food and drink would be in symbiosis with the old walls. We thought the idea was genius, but we did not have proper start-up funding. We had to create our dream and work with our own hands,” says Eva Dahlberg.

Instant success but falling revenue

It did not take long before the business needed more space. Within a week they had outgrown their lodgings.

“We planned to start small, but the good news tempted visitors and it just carried on.”

Despite many visitors and customers, it became more and more difficult for the business to increase turnover. Instead, it fell. One of the reasons, according to Eva Dahlberg, was that the level of service was too high and the skills were not quite right.



Eva Dahlgren shows the Swedish Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel around Saluhallen when the Royal couple visited Höganäs. Photo: Höganäs kommun.

“We hired only trained chefs who could answer all questions and our labour force was too big. They were good at the hotel and restaurant trade, but less trained in how the retail side of things works,” says Eva Dahlberg.

The worst possible timing

When the Corona pandemic hit in 2020, it was in the middle of the low season. There was no more money to put into the business. As a result, they had to file for bankruptcy in January this year and 15 staff lost their jobs.

“It takes several years to build a business but just a few minutes to go bankrupt,” says Eva Dahlberg.

She is not a woman who is beat back by one failure, however. Last year she built a pastel-coloured ice cream kiosk named after her neighbour Carl Herman, who regularly looks after her dog.

The harbour also houses the old fire station where Eva Dahlberg and her husband used to run their bistro. Because of limited seating numbers combined with current restrictions, they put a container on the ground nearby to offer shawarma and they also bought the neighbouring boathouse to turn it into a rotisserie.

Far too general restrictions

At the hotel, many conferences, weddings and big dinners have been cancelled since the pandemic hit. Although the old building has two very large dining halls, restrictions are the same as for smaller dining rooms.

“It has been devastating for a business like ours that our trade has been portrayed as a contamination source where everyone is treated the same. At some stage, the restrictions should have been reviewed so that bars, nightclubs and restaurants with fewer than 25 seats should be able to close and claim compensation.

“While we, who have the possibility to keep running the business with widely spaced tables should have been able to manage far better than what is currently the case,” says Eva Dahlberg. She makes no secret of the fact that she is disappointed.

At Grand Hôtel in Mölle, staff have had to go and others have been furloughed. Meanwhile, the challenge of inspiring the remaining staff remains.

“It should be fun to arrive at work and to have something to do while you are there. So it is important to be creative,” says Eva Dahlberg.

THE ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATION



"Misery is great when people have been put face to face with their own situation. The pandemic has left many to ponder life and whether they can go on when they can no longer meet other people."

Ingela Rubin is a deacon with the Church of Sweden in Höganäs parish. She decided to train for this occupation after a personal crisis.

Anonymous and free

The word deacon comes from Greek and means to serve. Deacons therefore exist to help those who are in corporal or spiritual distress.

“But I don’t need to go looking for people,” says Ingela Rubin.

“People seek me. Perhaps because they know it won’t cost them anything and because we do not keep written records.”

The Church of Saint Clare in Stockholm is Ingela Rubin’s inspiration. It is a compassionate church even for those who are hardest hit, as she puts it. The church is well-known for its soup lunches and its presence at Sergels square in the Swedish capital.



Ingela Rubin at Himmelfärdskyrkan in Höganäs.

“The pandemic put a stop to a range of face-to-face activities for our congregation, just like for so many others, says Ingela Rubin who despite it all has not been idle.

While she has not been able to welcome people indoors, she has met them in other ways. Sometimes she has put on her green deacon shirt and walked the streets to meet Höganäs citizens.

Another initiative has been to start a walkers’ group for max eight people who meet every Wednesday at 10 am to walk along the seafront to Lerberget right south of Höganäs and then back through the forest.

“We brought coffee and sandwiches and walked no faster than our weakest link. One of the walkers said this is like my family, and it really is wonderful to take these walks together.”

The one-on-one conversations Ingela Rubin normally has in her office at the parish house were replaced with walks when possible. Home visits were changed for telephone conversations.

“Conversations is what I have been missing the most during the pandemic. To be close to the parishioners and create meeting places for them when they perhaps needed it the most.”

She says she has seen more pain among people but also more honesty.

“They want to talk and are more open than before. Many people find release when they are really able to tell their story.”

Ingela Rubin is the parish’s only deacon until the autumn when she gets a colleague. Until then, she and the priests share the one-to-one conversations.

“All the work we do in the church is social work, so it is completely natural that we receive our visitors together,” she says.

A protest to the government

Restrictions in Sweden were eased somewhat on 1 June this year, which made it easier for religious bodies and others to welcome more visitors.

The Höganäs congregation is now planning for a normal autumn, like it would have been without the pandemic, but will still follow the public health advice like the rest of the Church of Sweden.

This has not happened without protest, however. On 8 February this year, during the stricter lockdown period, the Christian Council of Sweden wrote an open letter to the Swedish Minister for Culture and Democracy signed by the Church of Sweden and other Christian bodies. The letter questions the restrictions’ inconsistencies using the Uppsala Cathedral as an example:

“Many of our church houses are large and should be able to house considerably more than eight people if we apply the square metre rule. The Uppsala Cathedral, for instance, should be able to offer space for 273 people for church services if the square metre rule is applied.”

The letter got a lot of media attention and the Christian Council of Sweden together with other bodies were invited to one of the Ministry of Culture and Democracy’s meetings with relevant parties to discuss pandemic issues on 17 February. An easing of the rules came June 1.



Call for joint Nordic sanctions against countries behind cyber attacks

Nordic countries' cybersecurity skills are improving, but what happens when an attacking country is identified? On 30 June, the Nordic Council will debate proposed joint Nordic sanctions in the case of cyberattacks. The proposal already has support among Norwegian researchers.

NEWS

29.06.2021

TEXT AND PHOTO: BJØRN LØNNUM ANDREASSEN

“Cyberattacks represent a serious threat not only towards the Nordics but also globally. They target our most important values – our democracy and open societies. That is why it is absolutely crucial to highlight this issue at the Nordic Council and to consider what we can do together in the face of this threat. Both cyber threats and the pandemic represent challenges that must be met with Nordic and international cooperation in order to find solutions,” says Bertel Haarder, President of the Nordic Council during 2021.

He gets support from Maria Bartnes, Research Director at SINTEF Digital in Trondheim.

“Our society is in the middle of a rush of digitalisation. All kinds of systems are going online. They are linked together and we introduce software and IT into all sectors,” she says and mentions the oil industry, health care, water supply and other critical functions.

Increasingly dependent

Bartnes is head of system development and security at SINTEF and is also an Adjunct Associate Professor at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology NTNU in Trondheim.

“A more digitalised society gives increased functionality. We can better survey and fix faults without having to go out into the field. We get better control and reduce the number of faults through the use of technology. But we also become more vulnerable. Different kinds of infrastructure are also becoming more interdependent. All social functions have become dependent on electricity and ICT. At the same time, electricity and ICT are dependent on each other,” she says.

“One fault in a system can have major consequences in a different system far away. Systems you might not immediately consider. It then becomes challenging to analyse risk and to understand how to prevent attacks,” says Bartnes.

More complex

“Each trade used to have their own systems and retained full control over them. You knew where to access and exit the systems and how a hacker might get in. It is harder to know the kind of danger hackers represent these days, and it will become harder still,” she says.

How much more vulnerable are we in the Nordics compared to 10 years ago?

“Interdependence between systems has increased. That means society is now far more vulnerable. But at the same time, we have become more aware of this, and security technology has improved. Security has not been idle while the technological development has marched on,” she says and adds that online consumer technology is growing at a rapid rate, especially in Norway.

“Security at hospitals is critical, where many people are using different types of online medical equipment. Equipment that improves patients’ lives is also online. This brings advantages and more potential vulnerability.”

Large capacity

China, Russia, Iran and Pakistan are listed as interfering actors by the Norwegian secret service.

“Foreign states have become more powerful. If someone really wants to attack us there is little we can do. They have vast resources and can spend years preparing an attack. This says something about motivation and the available resources.

“We can become better at developing more secure technology. Functionality drives technological development. Afterwards, people think about the need for security when the technology has already come into use. We need to integrate security into the development of technology at an earlier stage. Security should be a competitive advantage,” she says.

It turns out not everything can be prevented.

“Something can hit us and we need to be able to limit the consequences. We seem to hear about new attacks every week in the media,” she says and mentions what happened on the

east coast of the USA when Colonial Pipeline’s IT systems were hacked.



When Colonial Pipeline's computer network was hacked it became big news across the USA. These are screenshots from various news flashes.

The company transports petrol diesel, aircraft fuel and paraffin from refineries. The pipeline network that was hit stretches from Texas to New Jersey.

“The pipeline was incapacitated for about a week. Fuel prices shot up and people panicked. Panic is an efficient tool for those who want to damage a society. In Norway, the parliament and a health provider has been attacked. It is scary yet interesting though to find out what makes hackers attack MPs. They can learn a lot about procedures and relations and therefore get the information needed to influence political processes. It is difficult to discover this as a society,” she says and underlines that political espionage is perhaps among the worst examples.

“When is a political decision influenced from the outside, and when is it real? Unwanted influence over time could start to control our society. This is challenging, and that is why it might be a positive thing if the Nordics cooperate on imposing sanctions,” argues the Research Director.

“We can make it easier to discover, disclose and protect ourselves. We have a lot in common. We share the same ideas around privacy and how to operate in the digital sphere. This means that cooperation will benefit us all. There are no national borders online, so it is a bit strange that a country should only protect what exists within its own borders,” says Bartnes.



Maria Bartnes want common IT security demands in the EU.

She believes data security skills will improve in the years to come. Company boards and leaders must demand solutions with higher levels of security. ICT providers do not implement security if security is not stipulated in the product order. If security is integrated, it gets better and it pays. Security has entered the boardrooms, and that happened more than ten years ago.

Certificate and legislation?

“Anyone can make and sell an IT solution, apps or gadgets without certification. Without a minimum security standard. Certification could make it easier to compare products. It would make it easier to choose a product according to how secure the equipment is. This is consumer-oriented, but also very interesting for places like hospitals,” she argues.

“The EU has introduced privacy legislation with GDPR. Perhaps we could have something similar on IT security?” she wonders, adding that a joint rulebook could stipulate some minimum demands.

More than activists

Threat actors can be categorised according to a threat pyramid, says Nils Kalstad. He is Head of Department at the Department of Information Security and Communication at NTNU.

“Some hackers can be compared to activists who demonstrate in the streets carrying banners and shouting slogans. They only want to test the technology. Next in the pyramid is small-time and organised crime. Then you have actors supported by foreign states and at the top, you find foreign states.

“Information forms the basis for espionage, which is something all countries have been doing for a long time. This is just a new arena. It becomes easier to run disruption operations, or deep face news as it is now called, on an international level. False or adapted information posing as legitimate in-

formation over time is being spread in order to manipulate public opinion or part of the population’s sense of reality. The internet really has made the world a smaller place.”

Improved courses

The opportunity to study digital security at NTNU has improved over the past seven years.

“The capacity has tripled. The courses are attractive and popular. Digital security is also being included in basic education in new curricula. Companies also put more resources into further education with support from the Research Council of Norway.

“There are, however, not enough Norwegian candidates on special PhD courses in information technology across our universities,” he says and adds that many Norwegian master degree students often go into attractive jobs rather than pursuing a PhD.



Future funding of geological research not so rock-solid

The Nordic Volcanological Centre (NordVulk) has secured scholarships for many Nordic geologists to study or do research in Iceland. They have been able to study lava of various ages and, with luck, witness a volcanic eruption. But now NordVulk's funding is no longer rock-solid.

NEWS

29.06.2021

TEXT: HALLGRÍMUR INDRÍÐASON, PHOTO: EEMU RANTA

Rikke Pedersen, the current Centre Manager, says it all started in the 70s when five Nordic geologists – one from each Nordic country – were on a field trip to Iceland.

“The five geologists got the idea of setting up a joint Nordic institute here since it is possible to study active processes related to volcanos in Iceland,” she says.

Pedersen explains that the Nordic region has rich geologic diversity, from day-fresh lava flows to mountains that were formed billions of years ago.



Rikke Pedersen heads NordVulk. Photo: Hallgrímur Indriðason.

“Icelandic geologists can travel to Greenland to see how the ancient mountains have changed. Likewise, geologists from other Nordic countries, who have nothing but million- or billion-years-old rock to study, get to witness the active processes. When we cooperate we get to see the whole picture.”

NordVulk aims to gather different experts from various Nordic countries so that they can complement each other's research.

Freysteinn Sigmundsson, Professor of geophysics and former head of NordVulk, says all the researchers are on long-term projects that are not dependent on any active volcanic eruptions.

“But when you do get an eruption, we cooperate to try to understand what is happening. We also provide advice to authorities and the public in Iceland and in other Nordic countries. Right now we have an ongoing eruption in Geldingadalir, which gives students and researchers the opportunity to vary their research and to get experience from an active eruption. This is incredibly valuable.”

Happy geologists

We cannot talk about NordVulk without mentioning the eruption in Geldingadalir in Reykjanes of course. It started in March and has lasted for more than three months as we write. Rikke Pedersen says there was a lot of media attention during the first week of the eruption, but that things have quietened down since.



Geldingadalir in Reykjanes on 24 March 2021, five days after the eruption started. Photo: Berserkur, Wikipedia.

But the geologists who were already in Iceland were, and remain, extremely happy.

“They can do fieldwork by observing and participating in taking samples or measurements. Then they participate in research projects on how eruptions begin,” says Pedersen.

For the geologists, this eruption is also useful because it is very accessible.

“We had people near the 2015 Holuhraun eruption 50% of the time. It lasted for six months and was far into the mountains. But there were also many students involved there,” he says.

It is common that the media, and not least people who live close to the eruption site, want to know what is going to happen in the coming days or weeks. Right now, the issue is whether the lava flow will reach Suðurstrandarvegur, an important road in the southern part of Iceland.

Yet despite the number of volcano experts in Iceland, it is difficult to predict what will happen.

“There are so many things that can happen to eruptions like this. We can create a model for when the lava will cross Suðurstrandarvegur if there are no changes. But changes happen all the time. New fissures emerge, the lava flow increases and so on. This is nature and we cannot control it. But we can react.”

Although NordVulk has been operational for almost 50 years, its future is now uncertain. To begin with, it was financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers. In 2004, NordVulk became part of the University of Iceland and half of its funding now comes from the Icelandic state.



Freysteinn Sigmundsson, who was NordVulk's leader at the time, says the reason was a desire to be integrated into the University of Iceland.

"Which meant less money from the Nordic Council of Ministers and more from the Icelandic state. Yet it gave us the best opportunity to teach young Nordic researchers with an interest in volcanology."

Sigmundsson believes it was a good solution and gives two examples to explain why:

"When Eyafjallajökull erupted in 2010, NordVulk had to advise authorities around the world, especially on the consequences for air traffic, but it also had to advise Nordic emergency services. NordVulk played an important part because the consequences were so severe. It is also very important that the Nordic countries can get advice from one institute when we have eruptions that have consequences beyond our own borders.

"We now have the Geldingadalir eruption, which is smaller, but we provide important information to the other Nordic countries. All the NordVulk researchers work really well together, and those who come from other Nordic countries get the chance to get to know different types of geologists."

Changes to funding

This year, the funding was moved from the Nordic Council of Ministers to NordForsk, the joint Nordic research fund. Rikke Pedersen says this solution will cover the next three years.

"After that, we must apply for funds in competition with others. That will be a major change which we are now preparing for. It means we must be able to sell what we do to whoever holds the purse strings."

Pedersen says the funding has in fact been uncertain since 2012.

"At the time there was a plan to nationalise five Nordic institutes, including NordVulk. That would have meant leaving the joint Nordic system and the individual countries taking over responsibility for the institutes.

"The main debate in later years has been why Iceland should finance a joint Nordic institute. That would only make it an Icelandic institute! But we got support from the Minister of Education, Science and Culture Lilja Alfredsdóttir, so we can now apply for NordForsk funds together with the other institutes.

"But the joint funding ends in 2024. After that, we can apply for funds every five years, and then we will be in a new situation. Yet we plan to continue our cooperation with other Nordic institutes and students should still be able to benefit from different countries' expertise."

The expertise is about more than what happens under the Earth's crust.

"Much of NordVulk's research is very relevant for the other Nordic countries, for instance, the CarbFix project which is central to climate change. This is not only about what has already happened, but it is also about how to limit future climate change."

Freysteinn Sigmundsson believes NordVulk is very important to the international geological research cooperation that the Nordic countries participate in.

"It would be a great loss if NordVulk disappeared. It provides the Nordics with the energy to cooperate in this area of expertise and it secures training for Nordic researchers across a wide field of volcanology. Volcanos have more or less shaped the rock that the Nordic countries sit on, and students who come here learn more about the process by studying other Nordic countries. This is of great importance."

A life-changing event



Finnish geologist Eemu Ranta arrived in Iceland in 2017 on a NordVulk scholarship. He is still there and plans to take his PhD later this year.

Ranta took his bachelor's degree in geology in Stockholm. One of his mentors there had been to Iceland on a NordVulk scholarship for his PhD project.

“This was always on my mind. I moved home to Finland to take my master’s, and when it was time to study further I sent off an application to NordVulk to study in Iceland.”

When Ranta came to Iceland, the landscape there surprised him.

“It is a fantastic country, especially for a geologist who has lived in countries like Finland and Sweden where the landscapes don’t change much. In Finland, the rock you stand on was created 1.5 billion years ago. In Iceland, it is being created all the time.”

And right now this is happening in Geldingadalir.

“Watching this is life-changing for me. I had almost lost hope to be able to witness an eruption in Iceland. There is normally one every fourth or fifth year. So if you stay here for four years you are in fact a little unlucky if it doesn’t happen.”

Eemu Ranta’s group study geophysics – what rock is made of and how it travels through Earth’s crust to the surface.

“We went to Geldingadalir to take samples for the first time two days after the eruption began, and we have gone there regularly ever since. We analyse the sample material to get a clearer idea of what is happening in this eruption. So it has been a very good experience.”

Ranta says the eruption has also been important to him professionally since his main interest is what happens in the mantle right below Earth’s crust.

“You don’t get samples from there very often like this eruption has provided us with. The magma comes from very deep within Earth, so it is a fantastic opportunity to be able to see it in real life. But it is also fantastic to see how lava flows form. It is far more chaotic than you might think from looking at old lava in Iceland. You get a completely new view of how this happens.”

Ranta will carry out a short research project in Iceland after finishing his PhD. The project ends next summer, and what happens next is not clear. But he is sure his experience from Iceland will come in handy.

“And that is not only about witnessing eruptions. It has also been fantastic to see the geothermal areas which I had been studying in Finland. If it wasn’t for NordVulk, I would not have been able to come to Iceland for my PhD,” says Eemu Ranta.



100 years of autonomy: Åland celebrates

Åland is marking 100 years of autonomy from Finland with year-long celebrations. Not everyone wanted the autonomy solution at first, but it has turned out to be a winning ticket allowing Ålanders to create a prosperous island society. Yet Åland with its shipping and tourism industries has been hard hit by the pandemic.

NEWS

29.06.2021

TEXT: HELENA FORSGÅRD, PHOTO: HÜLYA TOKUR-EHRES/ÅLANDSTIDNINGEN

The numbers for 2020 say it all. As the border with Sweden was closed to leisure travellers, the number of visitors to Åland from the neighbouring country fell by 90% compared to 2019.

Harbour traffic in the capital Mariehamn was halved. Two ferries that had been running daily between Stockholm and Mariehamn were retired, and the Helsinki-Mariehamn-Stockholm route was cancelled. Seamen were furloughed or

let go, along with hotel and restaurant workers. Other smaller businesses in the service sector were hit too.

According to Statistics and Research Åland, the island's GDP fell by 15% last year, and the economy can only recover when passenger ferry companies can return to normal operations.

Unemployment in Åland stood at a record-high 13.4% in May 2020. In May 2019 it was 3.2%. Things have improved somewhat, and in May this year unemployment had fallen to 7.1%.

Light at the end of the tunnel

Fredrik Karlström, Minister for Industry and Trade in Åland's government, is still optimistic about the future.



"Our IT cluster is doing well and there is increased demand for their products. The banking and insurance sector is healthy and becomes more and more important every year. We also see enormous potential for offshore wind power which is one of the government's focus areas for the reboot of Åland," he says.

Ten large wind power plants come on stream in April next year, meaning wind power will cover 65% of Åland's energy needs. Karlström also points out that Åland is a desirable place that attracts new people.

"The important cornerstones that are necessary for a modern and well-functioning society are in place. You would be hard-pressed to find better schooling and healthcare anywhere else. Add to that the safety and closeness we enjoy in Åland society. Nearly 1,000 people chose to move here during the year of the pandemic, and more are welcome."



The glory days of conferences and leisure travel at sea might be gone for good, says Jan-Erik Rask, the Åland Chamber of Commerce CEO. Photo: Erkki Santamala/Nya Åland

Jan-Erik Rask, the Åland Chamber of Commerce CEO, says several trades managed better than usual during the pandemic – both in the IT sector and among home improvement companies.

"So far no bankruptcies have been caused by the pandemic. This has of course a lot to do with different support measures offered to the companies," he says.

Several new companies have started up, often by people who lost their jobs. It remains to be seen whether they will succeed in the longer term.

Finnish visitors

Another positive sign is the increase in visitors from Finland. Two ferry companies have set up special routes between Helsinki and Mariehamn this summer and passengers have time to spend several hours ashore.

When the Finnish government announced the easing of restrictions on visitors from 21 June, the shipowners responded quickly. The Helsingfors-Mariehamn-Stockholm routes will be back this summer, albeit with fewer departures than normal.

"But we have reason to believe there will be a lasting restructuring of ferry crossings to Åland. The best days of conferences and pure leisure trips might be gone for good," says Jan-Erik Rask

"A sense of grief"

The pandemic aftermath has not put the breaks on the celebrations of 100 years of autonomy – which will go on for a whole year. Yet back in 1921, when the League of Nations announced the deal securing autonomy from Finland, there was much disappointment. "There was a sense of grief resting over the beautiful, summery landscape," as one history book puts it.

“The decision was after all a major defeat for the activists in the Åland Movement, who had been fighting for reunification with Sweden. But the movement’s main leaders swallowed their disappointment and took the lead to make autonomy a reality,” says Dan Nordman, a senior history lecturer at the Åland upper secondary school.



Åland's parliament has 30 elected representatives and meet in the parliament building's main chamber. Photo: Johannes Jansson/Norden.org

On 8 May 1922, Åland’s first parliament was elected and it met on 9 June that year.

Building up pride

Autonomy did not get properly off the ground until the 1950s. In 1951, Åland got a new autonomy act which secured more legislative rights. The Right of Domicile on Åland was introduced, granting people who lived there certain rights. Åland also secured the right to use its own flag.

“This is when you can start to talk about “a time of nation-building”. You begin to build up pride in autonomy; you are no longer simply a left-over people that ended up on the wrong side of the border, no longer a child kidnapped by an evil stepmother. You start to create your own identity,” says Dan Nordman.

Developed further

Since then, autonomy has taken several steps forwards. The autonomy act has been revised and given Åland more room for manoeuvre and a parliament building with space for the parliament and government has been built. Åland is now part of the Nordic cooperation and has its own postal service.

After a referendum in 1994, the government approved EU membership for Åland, but the island remained outside the European Customs Union.



Viking Line's Amorella ferry has, despite the pandemic, been operating the Åbo-Mariehamn-Stockholm route. Photo: Viking Line.

This meant duty-free sales on passenger ferries to and from Åland could continue, but Åland would retain a customs border with the rest of the EU. This means more administrative work for the trade of goods between Åland and the rest of the Union.

Nearly a micro-state

How would Åland have looked today if it had become a part of Sweden?

This is a question that historians do not want to answer. Many things can happen in a hundred years, and today it is impossible to say anything certain about which direction Åland would have taken if it had been part of Sweden.

“Åland would probably not have enjoyed the language protection we have today,” says Dan Nordman.

“There has been enormous change since the early 1900s when Åland was a neglected part of Åbo and Björneborgs county. Today, Åland is nearly a micro-state and a prosperous part of Finland. Our local democracy means we get more responsibility and can influence the direction our society takes. Autonomy, which was considered to be a losing ticket, turned into a winning one!”



“Chocolate brown is the post-pandemic comeback office colour”

What do I wear? That could be this autumn’s great question for many who will be returning to work after the holidays. Many Finnish employees have been working from home since March 2020.

THEME

29.06.2021

TEXT: BENGT ÖSTLING, FOTO: CATA PORTIN

Corona restrictions have led to furloughs or shorter working hours for many people. What to wear might not be the biggest problem, but it still matters. And there are people who are ready to help. One of them is Else Lindroos, fashion advisor at Stockmann department store in Helsinki.

She has given much thought to this autumn’s fashion. She knows what to recommend and what Finns want. Right now, people are buying loose-fitting colourful clothes in Stock-

mann’s summer sales. This autumn things will turn a bit conservative and colours will change. Chocolate brown looks set to become the post-Corona comeback fashion colour in offices.

The trend for soft fabrics is visible elsewhere in Finland too. Underwear that has traditionally been an intimate piece of clothing has broken out and become fashion. Do not be sur-

prised if you spot a pyjama or nightdress on a Nordic street corner or at a workplace this autumn!

Scandinavian design post-Corona

Finnish fashion sense has traditionally been fairly strict and conservative. But this was changing already before the pandemic hit. Helsinki is about to see a looser kind of fashion.



Inspiration is being sought from the many clothes designers in Denmark and also from some in Sweden. Popular sports garments come from Norway. At Stockmann, they are talking about “self-confident and inclusive Scandinavian design.”

“They are always a little ahead on fashion and they seem to be happy in their clothes,” says Else-Maj who often used to go to trendy Copenhagen to check out clothes – back when this was possible.

Many of her customers want something stylish yet relaxed, “a bit like they dress in Denmark.” The term “hygge” covers interiors and lifestyle, but you can see it in the way they dress too.

“The Danes look like they have just thrown on what they happen to have lying around. There is something unplanned about it and it looks good,” she says when describing the individual style found in that country. In Sweden, almost everyone has the same style when something is in fashion, but in Denmark, colours define a more personal style.

We want clothes for the whole body

When remote working began to dominate, the fashion industry discovered something. Many started focusing on tops only – the bits that were visible during online meetings. People have been mostly buying shirts and blouses, perhaps some jewellery and scarves. But below that, not so much – because it has not been visible.



When Finns finally can go shopping again, they look for different clothes compared to before the pandemic.

Finns are tired of sitting at home. Else Lindroos saw this among her customers in Stockmann’s fashion department. They might not have bought any new clothes for a year. When they enter out into the sunshine they want something other than their grey and boring joggers.

Finns will most probably not move straight into suits this autumn, but just be comfortable and stylish. There are many suits with elastic waists, promises Else Lindroos. She encourages customers not to simply choose black but to choose colours.

Stockmann’s annual report talks about adapting to changing customer needs during this extraordinary year. Customers behave differently, with fewer parties and meetings and more online shopping and working from home.

Selections and deliveries have been adapted to softer and more comfortable styles. Clothes that have been ordered already have been redesigned. Undergarments, pyjamas and joggers have replaced last year’s planned outdoor wear.

Spicy, happy colours after the Corona tristesse

Else Lindroos explains some of what she looks for when she is seeking out something new and fitting together with her customers.

Silk shirts can be combined with trousers and dresses. Leather is always good and works both in hot and cold weather. Polo shirts are making a comeback this autumn.

Many have sat at home in warm and cosy woollen socks in front of their computer. They might want to carry on wearing something soft, woollen and warm in combination with other items.

Lace is also returning in the autumn for party occasions. And the trend colour is dark brown, for instance for the blazer. Under it, you could wear a T-shirt combined with shiny trousers.



Else Lindroos choosing clothes at Stockmann.

“Some items will last you a week if you chop and change a bit. You don’t need loads of clothes in your wardrobe, just mix it up a little. You should have comfortable outfits, a long woollen jumper goes with nearly anything and also works well as an overcoat.”

Else Lindroos talks about tights in different colours. These should be in spicy, warm colours that you find in nature. She thinks there will be a veritable explosion of colour. People want to demonstrate that you can once again dress up when it is possible to get out among people.

Will the Corona kilos go?

This autumn, some employees will discover that their old clothes no longer fit them. Increased obesity has been a trend for a while in Finland. A fresh report from the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare found that more and more people are overweight, and it calls the development worrying.

Many have gained a few extra kilos from sitting still at home in front of the computer during the pandemic.

In 2020, 65% of Finnish men and 49% of women between 20 to 54 were overweight or obese, according to the Institute. Else Lindroos has solutions to this problem. But you should not count on the kilos disappearing along with the infection.

“A vest or a tunic can cover up and hide some extra Corona kilos. That is why many prefer loose-fitting clothes, with or without a belt. Then you don’t have to worry about your extra kilos showing.”

Else Lindroos also believes many want comfortable dresses in soft cotton. Shoes matter too. She predicts sneakers for everyday life and celebrations. In these, you can also take exercise and walk a bit further. Sneakers are also good for summer events, which are often held outside because of Corona restrictions.

Many would perhaps like to go to a party in high heels, but when no parties have been held these shoes have been left alone, many customers complain.

Dresses become comfort clothes

Both lady’s and men’s fashion have been inspired by our comfort clothes from the Corona period. Soft materials with elasticated waists, soft cotton and kashmir hoodies, also from luxury brands. The inspiration from home wear is also visible in men’s suits.

Else Lindroos is showing us several different ones. They need not be very strict and uncomfortable she says, and demonstrates soft materials and elasticated waists. There is no stiff lining in the suit jacket anymore. Clothes are stretchy, easy to pack and they do not need ironing when you are allowed to travel once more.

T-shirts are also used a lot in offices. They are comfortable and stretchy, have different structures and no buttons. Linen and woollen jumpers also work well this autumn.

The most popular blazers are in fact a shirt in a soft material but with pockets. Ties seem to be completely out, but can be replaced by a scarf or the material in the blazer breast pocket. It sounds as if Else Lindroos would want ties relegated to appear only in funerals and in workplaces with a very conservative dress code.

Colourful clothes could mean success

Many people are regular customers. Others come less often. Else Lindroos mentions another group of people who need help this autumn. Those who have been on parental leave at home with children for a few years. They get help upgrading their style before their return to the labour market.

“After spending some years isolated with the children at home and in the park, you have been doing anything but checking out the latest fashion. This also makes it difficult to order clothes online, because the style and sizes have changed after three years.”

Clothes and food in the same trolley

Clothes manufacturers have been facing hard times, and so have those who sell clothes and fashion. Finland’s textile and fashion industries are hopeful that they can become an important sector once more, creating jobs and wellbeing.

The Corona pandemic has damaged Finland’s fashion industry, but this spring Finnish people rekindled their interest in clothes and new records were broken. At the start of the pandemic, many cut down on their visits to shops and tried to do all their errands in one go – including clothes shopping.

So now shopping for clothes is often combined with food shopping at shopping centres as families come out of isolation to make major purchases.

This way of shopping is most common among families with young children. Single people under 35 are also among those who have clothes and food in the same shopping trolley.

The pandemic led to a radical change in consumer habits. The demand for fashion dropped, as those working at the Stockmann department store experienced. But demand for domestic goods and cosmetics rose. The Lindex fashion house was the only one to maintain its strong position in the Stockmann group.

Stockmann was already facing problems, but the pandemic meant extra challenges. The company has launched a root and branch review which has shaken the very foundations of the historic department store. Its Russia operations have closed down. Many departments have been reduced, closed or sold to be run by other companies.

The department store in the centre of Helsinki is being sold to pay off debts. The fashion departments are currently responsible for 54% of turnover. The rest is divided between beauty products, furnishings and foodstuffs. But this year, fashion customers seem to be back, Stockmann points out.



The Stockmann department store faced problems even before the Corona pandemic hit. Photo: Sektori, Wikipedia.

During the most severe lockdown when customers disappeared, new fashion services were developed. Else-Maj Lindros and her colleagues rang their regular customers to set up what Stockmann calls the “Remote Fashion” service. The fashion advisors presented suitable clothes online after a conversation with the customers and later delivered the chosen products to them.

It became a way of surviving the Corona crisis.

How do you find a standard that fits all?

“It should be easy and not difficult to buy clothes. You should not have to worry about having made the wrong decision afterwards,” says Else Lindroos.

The department store’s window display is again relevant as many people have hesitated to enter because they have been afraid of contamination. Buying from fast-fashion chains

that offer cheaper clothes online which are not meant to last, means there is a higher risk of choosing the wrong thing.

Else Lindroos can see the downside of online shopping. In the worst case, you have to return all the clothes that you ordered and tried at home, only to see nothing fits.

Despite the existence of many international standard measurements for clothes, you need to know different producers’ way of measuring. Many women have three different sizes depending on which fashion house they buy from. Many different body shapes and national traditions make a common measurement solution difficult.

Politicians – the missing customer group

Marimekko is one of Finland’s best-known brands. Five ministers in the current government have been wearing colourful Marimekko items in press conferences. Prime Minister Sanna Marin has been presented as a fashion icon in foreign media.



Minister of Social Affairs and Health Aino-Kaisa Pekonen is one of the Finnish government ministers who have been wearing Marimekko fashion. Photo: Laura Kotila, Ministry of Social Affairs.

It is important that government ministers wear colours and patterns, especially when these are made in Finland. This also has an effect on customers. Marimekko’s clothes were the first to sell in Stockmann’s summer sales, says Else Lindroos. Many customers want to buy domestic brands in order to support the Finnish fashion industry.

Else Lindroos would have liked to see more politicians visiting. During the municipal elections in late June, she felt candidates did not pay attention to their clothes, and hence not their voters. This is particularly important in Finland where you vote for individual candidates and not party lists. They could do worse than getting some fashion advice before going to the photographer.

“These are the only pictures you have of a person who is running for office. What has the candidate put into the photo session which would make me want to vote for them? Do they look efficient, approachable and open?”

Else Lindroos is convinced you can do better in an election if you dress right. She underlines that most politicians do dress stylishly, and they have to go for style as they are representing Finland after all. She also does not want to criticise any particular style, but is happy to help customers find their own.

"I support personal styles, but you have to respect the dress codes."

The same limitations apply to politicians as for Finns in general: they are a bit boring and shy. We are a little conservative and not very adventurous in Finland. We do not want to stick out and disclose too much about our personality. Which means you do not dare to change styles even if it is tempting. Else Lindroos' advice is to pay good attention now, as so many things have changed.



100 years of comfort clothes coming out of the closet

A current exhibition at the Helsinki Design Museum showcases the Finnish clothing company Nanso and the 100 years-old history of their everyday textiles. The theme is “The Comfort Revolution” – how comfort and wellbeing has steered fashion’s evolution towards today’s Corona fashion.

THEME

29.06.2021

TEXT: BENGT ÖSTLING ÖSTLING, PHOTO: CATA PORTIN

Nanso has not needed to change their production. It jumps on the Corona trend of joggers and loungewear and benefits from the fact that less formal dress codes match the company’s products.

To begin with, Nanso made under and night garments, and now these have become part of the daily fashion known as loungewear. The T-shirt has gone from being an undergar-

ment to the world’s most popular piece of clothing. It is a symbol of revolt, freedom and feminism as well as hippie and pop culture, explained Liisa Jokinen, the curator for the current exhibition, and Nanso’s chief designer Noora Niinikoski during the opening.

The garments have not changed much. But consumers are getting quicker at jumping on new trends. The simple, infor-

mal garments from Nanso are now being used both as work and party clothes.

Liisa Jokinen points to how undergarments have become public – and a megaphone for an independent attitude. She has been living in New York for many years, where she runs Gem – a company selling vintage clothes through an app.



She is also a street fashion photographer. The phenomenon can be clearly seen there. A pyjama on the street is no longer that unusual, as people nowadays decide what they wear themselves.

Which direction? Everyone decides for themselves

Noora Niinikoski says that Nanso has become known as the company making soft undergarments. So can you still use them as a summer outfit on the beach? Of course, that is up to the individual!

Liisa Jokinen agrees. The fact that everyone can decide for themselves is what makes fashion exciting. The main point is that the garment feels comfortable. She also points out another fashion phenomenon: Clothes are getting increasingly emotional, like good friends. You want to keep them close and in good nick, to keep the friendship going by following the maintenance and washing advice.

The ideal is to have a wardrobe full of favourites and friends – no unnecessary or out-of-date clothes.

Noora Niinikoski explains how she is trend-spotting for clothes in workplaces. She sits down in a company's canteen and studies what employees wear. This gives her many ideas for Nanso too.

Formal workwear has changed. Today you can wear comfortable clothes at work. Jobs have changed too, of course, but office-based work is still predominantly sitting on a chair.

The Nanso exhibition shows flower-patterned clothes in gentle colours, but Liisa Jokinen believes her favourite garment could be this autumn's trend: neon-coloured happy pants. The colours have become lighter and natural colours are in.

You can combine sequins and joggers

But what comes next – will the comfort of working from home remain the trend? Liisa Jokinen believes you can combine comfort and party clothes. There is a desire to dress up again, in sparkles and sequins or at least luxurious joggers and high heels.



The luxury sales have not fallen during the pandemic, explains Liisa Jokinen, pointing to New York street fashion. As things get back to normal, people want to dress up, both in a fun and in a pretty way. But you can still combine this with comfort clothes.

There is also an opening for sustainability and economics in this kind of fashion, according to the principle of “buy nothing, save and re-use”. Post-pandemic, we could see hybrid solutions in clothes just like in the way we will be working – sometimes in the office, sometimes at home. Liisa Jokinen is nevertheless a bit cynical about the transition. She is convinced we are moving towards sustainable fashion consumption, but that it will take time.

A fashion mystery

There will be no going back to old dress codes and old fashion believes Liisa Jokinen. Dress codes are already softening. Some employers had casual Friday, others had already come to a point where only Fridays were formal.

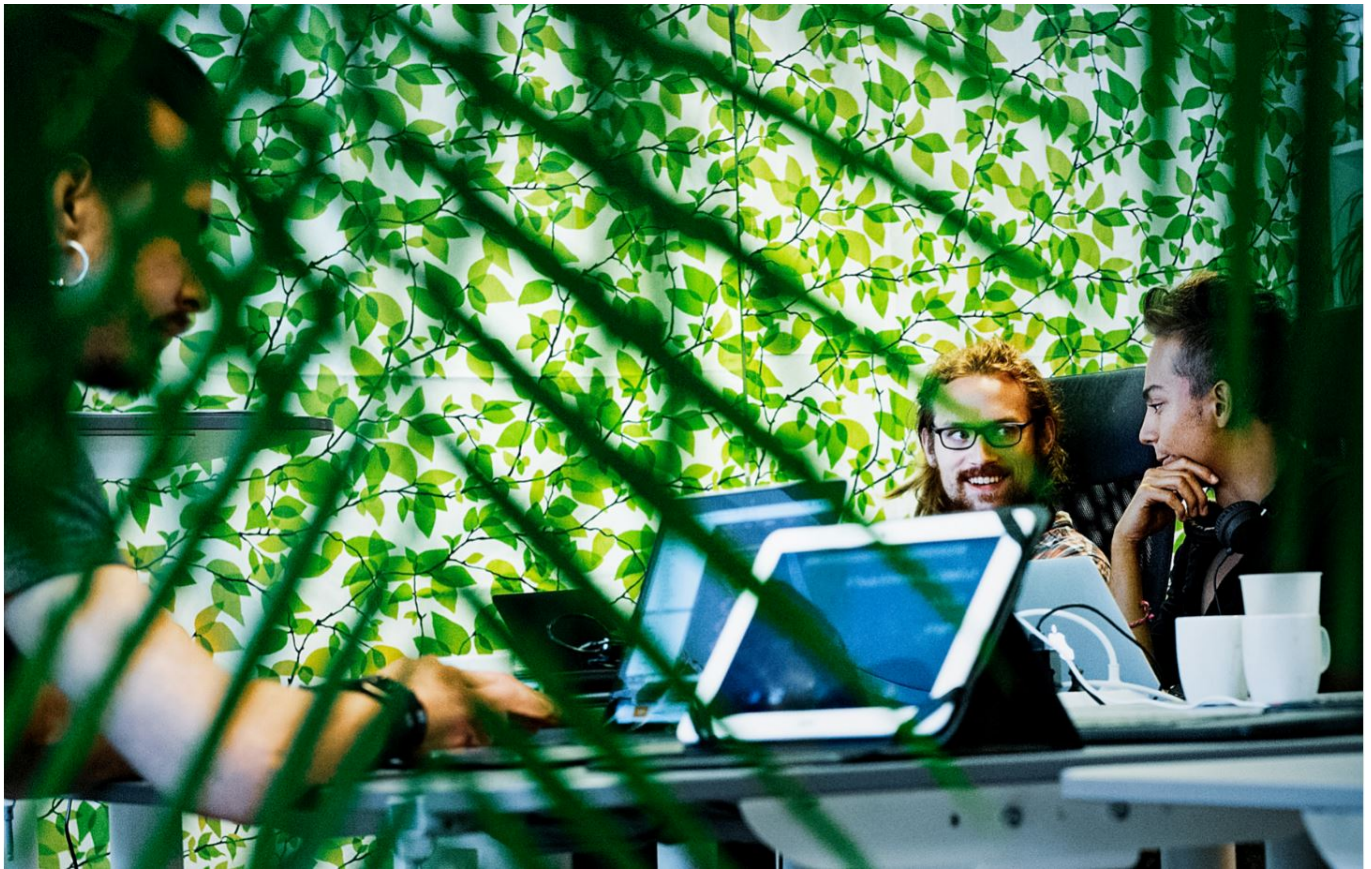
“Fashion is a funny mystery, nobody knows exactly where the signals are coming from. That is what is so exciting with trends and fashion. You cannot explain where it comes from.”

The world of fashion also lost some of its ability to evolve as international fashion weeks were cancelled because of the pandemic. This eased some of the pressure on creating fresh collections several times a year. It gives creators of clothes the chance to move away from the short fashion cycles.

You show little at a time and not too much so that you can easily pull it back if it became necessary to isolate again for instance. This helps reduce losses in clothes shops where old fashion must be thrown out.

There's no longer one global trend, says Liisa Jokinen. Fashion does not develop in isolation from the rest of society. Many phenomena have an effect, and right now it is the Corona pandemic.

“But there are many types of trends and they overlap. That is so liberating, you don't have to care and just choose the trend you like yourself.”



Nordic model well suited for future of work challenges

Nordic labour ministers met digitally on 2 June to discuss the final report from the Nordic research project on the future of work. It warns of challenges to the Nordic model, but also concludes it is the best tool in the fight against an unequal labour market.

NEWS

29.06.2021

TEXT: BJÖRN LINDAHL, PHOTO: CATA PORTIN

Future of Work is the largest research programme on the labour market ever financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers. Since 2017, 30 researchers have studied megatrends like digitalisation, demography, globalisation and climate change and their potential effects on the Nordic labour markets. The result has been summarised in four points:

- There might be labour shortages
- There might be job shortages
- There might be skills gaps
- There might be a more segregated working life

A couple of these points look to be contradictory. How can you have labour shortages and jobs shortages? The answer lies in point number three – many of the new jobs that are being created demand skills which job seekers do not have, while there are fewer jobs for low-skilled workers.

Will this in turn lead to a more unfair labour market where the best-paid workers get paid even more while those on low pay fall even further behind?

“Creating more productive service jobs in new companies like Spotify will not help those at the back of the queue,” as Kristin Alsos, head of research at Fafo, put it.



The Future of Work research journey has seen many presentations. This is Jon Erik Dølvik and Kristin Alsos in Iceland in 2019 preparing to deliver one of them. Photo: Björn Lindahl

She has coordinated the Nordic researchers' work together with Jon Erik Dølvik. During their process, some myths have been busted – new technology will not lead to mass unemployment for instance. This did not happen with the introduction of computers, and it will not happen as a result of digitalisation or artificial intelligence, AI. Even if robots are taking over certain tasks like physical ones in factories or via software, new needs arise parallel to this.

“As more services in society are digitalised, we must make sure everyone can use them. They also need to be secure so that they cannot be hacked,” the ministers pointed out. There is currently a serious lack of cybersecurity experts globally.

What should we work with on a Nordic level?

The meeting also included representatives from the social partners and institutions like the Nordic Council of Ministers, NCM.

“Which solutions to these challenges should we focus on working with on a Nordic level?” asked the NCM Secretary General Paula Lehtomäki.

Jon Erik Dølvik believed some of the cross-border issues would naturally belong on a Nordic level.

“How to secure a Nordic agreement on the legal position of platform companies when it comes to labour law is another issue, along with the fight against tax competition. How to tax Big Tech is a crucial issue if you want to raise enough taxes to cover public expenditure,” said Dølvik.

What about Corona?

The researchers were also asked how the Corona pandemic is affecting the labour market and the Nordic region.

“We risk seeing a slowing down of green change since investments in green technology might fall due to an unfavourable economic situation and other challenges that have been amplified,” said Kristin Alsos.

Although the researchers were not worried that new technology would lead to mass unemployment, the research does show that economic crises can have long-term consequences. Youth unemployment will probably rise in the coming years.

Yet they underlined that political decisions will be key to how high unemployment will be in future.

A lot of support from employers

“One of the things that surprised us the most was that the Nordic model with its tripartite cooperation and a high level of trust between the social partners retains so much support among employers,” said Jon Erik Dølvik.

“Perhaps the question can be summed up like this – will the Nordic model be changed by giants like Amazon taking ever greater market shares, or will Amazon have to adapt to the Nordic model,” said Kristin Alsos.

The Nordic Labour Journal has been covering the entire process of the Future of Work research. Read all the articles [here](#):