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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Berit Kvam

EMAIL

njeditor@gmail.com

WEB

www.arbeidslivinorden.org

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How to change the world

In this edition of the Nordic Labour Journal, we write about the ILO, the Treaty of Versailles and tourism. In a funny way, they are all linked.

EDITORIAL

27.06.2019

BY BJÖRN LINDAHL, ACTING EDITOR

100 years ago, the world's three most powerful men met in Paris to redraw the world map together with delegations from 30 countries. US President Woodrow Wilson, UK Prime Minister David Lloyd George and French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau were all victors after World War I.

Much had to be done in two months. The terms of Germany's surrender, the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire, the founding of the League of Nations. Two years previously, workers had staged a revolution in Russia. The founding of the International Labour Organisation was one way of counteracting communism. Governments would be joined by trade unions and employers in the work to improving conditions for workers, without damaging capitalism.

Much of what was decided by the three men in Paris came to nothing. Germany rapidly restored its military might, and the League of Nations collapsed as World War II broke out in 1939. The ILO was the only thing that remained. The tripartite cooperation proved to be resilient. New countries joined the organisation, which now counts 187 members. As the ILO held its 108th conference between 10-21 June in Genève, it was in a world with no centre, however.

The USA's influence has weakened dramatically under President Donald Trump. The UK is being torn apart by Brexit. In France, the people's parliament is again showing its strength. It is China's Xi Jinping who increasingly appears to be the most powerful leader, but even his representatives are facing millions of demonstrators in Hong Kong.

Under these circumstances, it is quite an achievement to get the ILO's 187 member countries to agree on a new declaration on the future of work, and on a convention against sexual harassment in the world of work. 5 700 delegates representing governments, trade unions and employers have come together in an enormous group effort.

The new declaration calls on all member countries to make sure:

- the effective realisation of gender equality in opportunities and treatment
- effective lifelong learning and quality education for all
- universal access to comprehensive and sustainable social protection
- effective measures to support people through the transitions they will face throughout their working lives

The conventions are the ILO's tool for changing the world. When they become part of national legislation, a level playing field is created. This is a long and difficult process, but the world has shrunk in the past 100 years. One country's labour force is only a plane journey away, just like one country's tourists. Whether the USA or China has the largest economy is still up for debate. The Chinese have passed the Americans with a good margin when it comes to tourism, however.

Chinese tourists now spend 258 billion US dollars abroad every year, compared to 135 billion dollars spent by Americans.

When we met the ILO's Director-General Guy Ryder in Reykjavik, Iceland, it was refreshing to meet someone who really carries a vision for how the world can be improved. Perhaps we could even control tourism? There will in any case be many Chinese tourists in the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles this summer.



Nordic trade unions praise #metoo convention

New international standards will protect everybody's right to a world of work free from violence and harassment. Danish and other Nordic trade unions call it a great leap forward for workers globally and in the Nordic region. Danish employers doubt it will have much effect.

NEWS

27.06.2019

TEXT: MARIE PREISLER, PHOTO: JESPER LUDVIGSEN, FH

Sexual assaults at work and other forms of violence and harassment must not be tolerated in any kind of workplace anywhere in the world. This is the clear signal in a new convention from the UN's International Labour Organisation, ILO. Nordic and Danish trade unions encourage Nordic countries to be the first to sign up to it.

187 of the world's countries are ILO members. During the organisation's annual conference in Genève in June 2019, a large majority of participating representatives from governments, employers and trade unions voted yes to the new convention, and to guidelines for how each member country can

secure everyone the right to a world of work free from violence and harassment. 439 of the ILO delegates voted in favour of the new convention, with just seven voting against and 30 abstaining.

Solidarity with the domestic helper

Some have called it "the #metoo convention", alluding to the #metoo movement against sexual harassment which began in the Hollywood film industry before spreading around much of the world. The convention will also have a global impact. It will secure better protection against violence and harassment. The Council of Nordic Trade Unions, NFS, agrees.

“The convention means a lot from a solidarity perspective. The world’s domestic helpers, street vendors and day labourers will, for instance, have their jobs acknowledged, and the convention says they should be treated with respect in a work environment free from violence and harassment,” the NFS said in a press release.

The convention says the right to a world of work free from violence and harassment includes *all* types of workers, irrespective of their contractual status. That means persons in training, volunteers, job seekers and individuals exercising the authority, duties or responsibilities of an employer are protected.



A lot of people have worked with the convention – here the whole committee on violence and harassment is gathered during the ILO conference. Photo: Crozet/Poteau.

The NFS and trade union movements internationally have been active and keen parties to the negotiations, which have been going on for years at the ILO in preparation for the convention. Majbrit Berlau has been one of the representatives from the Nordic negotiating team. She is the deputy head of the Danish Trade Union Confederation, which represents 1.4 million Danish workers. She calls the convention historic.

“This is the first time everyone’s right to work without facing the risk of violence and harassment has been defined as a joint international goal, and this will be hugely important. Not tomorrow, but in the long term, because we have now created a common, global framework,” says Majbrit Berlau.

Young workers face sexual harassment

In the long run, she believes the convention will provide considerably better protection for the many millions of people in the world with jobs in work environments that do not resemble Nordic ones – which enjoy regulations aimed at preventing violence and harassment at work. Yet the Nordics also have some way to go before securing a world of work completely free from violence and harassment, despite agreements and legislation regulating the Nordic labour markets. The convention is also relevant in a concrete sense, and can

make a difference in the Nordic region, believes Majbrit Berlau.

“Violence and harassment is happening all the time in the Nordic labour markets, so the Nordic countries definitely need to continue to work with this.”

Young people in Nordic labour markets represent a group that is exposed to harassment, she points out. Nearly every second Danish worker aged 18 to 29 have experienced harassment at work, which makes young people the one group which is most exposed to sexual harassment according to a survey carried out for the Danish Trade Union Confederation in March 2019. This is “deeply problematic” says Berlau.

In the same survey, one in three women and one in four men said they had experienced one or more types of harassment of a sexual nature in their current or previous workplace.

The Nordics should be leading the way

Public sector employees represent another big group in need of better protection, says Majbrit Berlau.

“The public sector is a big part of the Nordic labour markets, and public sector employees are at great risk of being exposed to violence from citizens, for instance. We see an increase in the number of threatened violence against public sector workers. Nordic countries really need to work towards reducing the levels of violence and threatened violence.”

Individual countries must now decide whether to ratify the convention, which will commit them to bring their national laws into conformity with the convention. The convention will not come into effect until one year after the first two countries have ratified it. Both Nordic and Danish trade unions *encourage Nordic governments to be the first to ratify the convention*. Majbrit Berlau believes the Nordic countries will only need minor adjustments to their existing legislation and agreements in order to fulfil the regulations in the convention.

DA did not vote for the convention

The message from employers is somewhat different. The Confederation of Danish Employers, DA, represents 14 Danish employer organisation, with a total of 24 000 private sector member companies. It is among the minority that voted blank when the ILO convention was put to the vote in Genève.

The DA said this was because the convention uses more far-reaching language and definitions in certain areas than the confederation can sign up to – even though the DA supports the idea that everyone has the right to a world of work free for violence and harassment.

Pernille Knudsen, Deputy Director General for the DA, does not think the convention will make a difference either. In a press release, she argues that Denmark already has com-

prehensive employer responsibilities, a strong labour inspectorate and comprehensive legislation in this area. She thinks the convention will struggle to contribute anything to the global fight against violence and discrimination in the world of work.

Majbrit Berlau calls the DA's message "very frustrating".



Guy Ryder: The multinational system must understand the importance of work issues

The ILO has celebrated its centenary. In a jubilant tweet from Geneva, Guy Ryder summed up the 108th session of the International Labour Conference: “We had big ambitions for this Conference, and it was a record breaker in every sense. We emerged with a new Convention, a new Recommendation and a Declaration that will take us forward to meet the challenges of tomorrow.”

PORTRAIT

27.06.2019

TEXT: BJÖRN LINDAHL, PHOTO: CROZET / POUTEAU

When the Nordic Labour Journal met ILO's Director-General Guy Ryder in Reykjavik a few weeks before the Geneva Conference, we asked him to look back at the process leading up to the centenary. “*What will be the thing where you can say that I made a difference?*” we asked.

“I’m not particularly into the “I” thing at all,” he said, making it clear that for him it is “I + LO” that matters:

“When it comes to what the ILO has done there are two things. Putting the Future of Work debate on the table I think

we have created a very serious way of thinking, a reflection around the world about the way the world of work is moving. And then, through a new declaration, giving answers to the questions about social injustice that people have all over the world.”

Got the Nordics involved

Guy Ryder was, however, instrumental in getting the Nordic countries involved. Already in 2015 he wrote a letter to the governments of the organisation’s 187 member states. He wanted them to think about and discuss a few topics concern-

ing changes in economics and working life, like job creation and the influence of new technology and changes in relations between employers and employees.

In February 2016 he got an answer from the Nordic governments, announcing a project in coordination with the office of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the ILO and the social partners. The themes that Guy Ryder mentioned became a big research project; The Future of Work, as well as a series of four conferences, the last one in Reykjavik. ILO also established a Global Commission, co-chaired by Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of Sweden, and Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa. Together with a diverse group of 27 thinkers, they identified challenges and formulated strategies for the future of work.

Although the Convention concerning the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work – also called the #metoo-convention in many countries – got the most attention during the Geneva conference, we suspect that it is the new declaration that is closest to Guy Ryder’s heart.

Based on social justice

As many of the speakers at the conference pointed out, the ILO was created as a part of the Versailles treaty of 1919. Many also quoted the preamble of the constitution, which stated that universal and lasting peace can only be established if it is based on social justice.



German Johannes Bell signs the Treaty of Versailles in the Hall of Mirrors, with various Allied delegations sitting and standing in front of him.

The Versailles treaty was written at a time when workers had already staged a revolution in Russia and deposed the tsar. When the conditions of labour exist involving such injustice, hardship and privation as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world is imperilled; then an improvement of those conditions is urgently required, argued the committee that wrote the preamble, which concluded that:

“...the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions in their own countries.”

The ILO is the only part of the League of Nations that survived World War II. Set up as one of two wings in the new organisation in Geneva that was going to promote coopera-

tion amongst nations, it soon encountered difficulties when the Nazis gained power in Germany.

By 1940 Switzerland was surrounded by German troops and faced a possible invasion. The ILO’s leaders were concerned about the organisation’s existence. They asked to set up a centre of activity in the USA, but were refused. Instead, a Canadian university stepped in, offering space in a disused chapel. After a perilous journey through occupied Europe, a core group of ILO officials settled in.

The Philadelphia declaration

In 1944 the war was drawing to an end. At the 26th Conference of the ILO in Philadelphia, a new set of guiding principles were adopted, introducing concepts like:

- Labour is not a commodity.
- Freedom of expression and of association are essential to sustained progress.
- Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere.

“The declaration of Philadelphia is quite remarkable. It’s 75 years old, but people are still reading it, people are still quoting it. It inspires people. It still makes people think about what we are doing with the world of work. If our Centenary Declaration can do anything like that, and I’m not trying to be presumptuous, then we will have done something important,” said Guy Ryder.

The ILO became the first specialised agency of the United Nations when it was created in 1945. Today, 187 of the UN’s 193 states are members.



The Swedish Minister of Labour, Ylva Johansson, has just signed the ILO convention on domestic workers during the Future of Work conference in Reykjavik. Photo: Björn Lindahl

Its primary task is to promote minimum labour standards for the world’s 3.5 billion strong labour force. It does this by creating international treaties called conventions, which can be adopted by member states. Once adopted, a convention becomes part of the country’s legal infrastructure. The organisation also produces non-binding recommendations and

provides technical assistance to help countries create Decent Work programs.

The ILO is operated as a tripartite organisation with representatives from governments, employers and labour unions. Guy Ryder is the first trade unionist to lead the organisation, all his nine predecessors were chosen by the governments.

Not in a good shape

At the Reykjavik conference, Guy Ryder told one of the panel debates about the difficulties he has been facing:

“Multinational institutions are not in a good shape. They are not in good shape for several reasons. We have a tough job on our hands in two regards.

“One is to have the multinational system itself fully appreciate the importance of work issues. A decision has been taken when the World Trade Organisation was established, to basically not talk about labour issues in their trade negotiations. It was a conscious decision. A barrier was built between our two organisations, down a street in Geneva, where they are on one side and we are on the other.

“But something strange is happening. If you look at trade negotiations today, the WTO has great difficulties concluding any trade agreement. Multinational trade agreements have run into the sand. Where trade agreements are concluded, it’s on bilateral, regional or sub-regional levels.

“75-80% of the trade agreements negotiated at that level contained labour clauses. Look at NAFTA-2. Look at the recent US, Canada, Mexico trade agreement: There is an extraordinary chapter about labour issues, all of them referring to ILO’s standards.

“It seems to me that this situation is taking us back to a logical understanding of how the global economy works. It makes no sense to think we can deal with labour here, trade there, environment there, finance there. We somehow have to synthesize and get greater coherence in these things.”

The pressure is growing

At the same time the pressure from ordinary citizens is growing.

“There are people like Greta Thunberg who are mobilising the young and there are people who show their discontent very strongly, like the yellow vests in France. I’m British so Brexit is on my mind. Look at our policies from the United States to Brazil – people are not particularly happy for the most part in the ways things are going for them.

“A lot of that dissatisfaction and agitation, discontent if you want to call it that, comes from what is happening in the world of work. I think there is a genuine feeling in large parts of the society that things are not going the right way. Things are not fair, they are not getting a fair reward for what they are doing. Our task is to give answers to their questions, but

to give answers which are in line with the principles and objectives of the ILO. It’s about rights, people’s rights, it’s about human security, international cooperation and social justice. This notion is a very fundamental notion of what is fair and what is not fair.

“And it’s also about dialogues, it’s not about imposing solutions but hard work, sitting with governments, workers and employers and finding solutions,” said Guy Ryder.

He still has two years left as Secretary-General, and even if the 108th session was a success there is still much to do. Specifically, the commission called for a Universal Labour Guarantee under which all workers, regardless of their contractual arrangement or employment status, would enjoy fundamental rights, an “adequate living wage” as defined in the ILO’s founding constitution 100 years ago, maximum limits on working hours, and health and safety protection at work.



Closing down the Faroes to attract more tourists

The Faroe Islands are closing down. Damaged nature will be fixed. The Prime Minister for the 18 green islands in the North Atlantic is being very clear: No tourists for an entire weekend. But the Faroes were not closed down. It was all a well-prepared PR stunt to attract more tourists to the country.

THEME

27.06.2019

TEKST: RÓLANT WAAG DAM, PHOTO: VISIT FAROE ISLANDS / TRÓNDUR DALSGARÐ

It attracted attention and created headlines. In late February this year, media from around the world told the same story. CNN, Washington Post, New York Times, Forbes, The Guardian and a range of other major international media.

“The Faroe Islands – closed for maintenance”, read the Visit Faroe Islands website on 20 February. The message was backed up with a video in which the Faroese Prime Minister, Aksel V. Johannesen, made it clear that the Faroes would be closed for maintenance during the last weekend in April. It would, however, be open for volunteers who wanted to come and lend a helping hand.

Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten was one of many media carrying the story. It referred to the website and the forewarned closure. “And this is a real warning. Because during the last weekend of April, the Faroe Islands plan to close off access to normal tourists”. Other media wrote: “A so far unique way of doing things”, “Controversial” and “Innovative”. The story was everywhere.

The problem as part of the solution

The day after the “controversial” statement from Visit Faroe Islands, Denmark’s largest union for marketing professionals – Dansk Markedsføring – said more than 300 news outlets had mentioned the country that would close for an entire

weekend. The story was a stunt – a campaign commissioned by Visit Faroe Islands and created by two advertising agencies, Faroese Sansir and Danish Mensch.

“Tourism is increasingly seen as a problem around the world. So we wanted to show that tourists can actually be part of the solution to the challenges that come in the wake of increased tourism,” Rune Hørslev, head of department and partner at Mensch, told Dansk Markedsføring’s website on 21 February.

A meaningful experience

We now fast-forward to the much talked about weekend. We are in the Faroes, it is 8am on Friday 26 April, and the rain is pouring down. Seven tourists are out in the downpour receiving instructions.

“It is a very meaningful experience when you travel somewhere, to be allowed to spend time with the local population and really try to understand their culture,” Dorota Glab tells Kringvarp Føroya, the national public broadcasting company.



One of the groups working with a path. Dorota Glab is number two, from the left.

She is being interviewed while standing on a narrow, worn-down path linking the towns of Elduvík and Oyndarfjørður on the second largest island, Oyndarfjørður.

Dorota Glab has travelled from Poland to the Faroe Islands. Six other people standing around her have done a similar thing. They have travelled from Finland, the Czech Republic, England and the USA. But now they are here, on the path called Líðin, which they will be mending under the leadership of Justinus Eidesgaard, who was born and raised in Oyndarfjørður, one of the two towns which the path links together. He has spent two days preparing the work that the foreign guests will undertake.

“It is important to do something about this path, because it can be dangerous to people who are out walking but perhaps not accustomed to it. People could easily fall over,” says Dorota Glab, and is proven right. Some time later one tourist has fallen twice, although suffering no injury.

“There is a strategy here, because we have not yet reached the steep parts – so now they can get used to working in this kind of environment,” says Justinus Eidesgaard just before they calmly move further out. He is convinced they will get a lot done over these few days.



“My experience from stonework is that a whole lot can happen in a short space of time,” he says optimistically to Faroese TV news on Friday night.

Three days later, Justinus Eidesgaard is proven right. It is Monday 29 April, and the work to secure the old path is finished. Dorota Glab and the six others have left again.

“I am just so proud of the foreign guests who came to the Faroe Islands to do something good. Today I have received many pictures taken by the team while we were working. These are good memories,” he says, and posts 12 of the pictures on Facebook.

Tourism is more than numbers

51 000 people live on the Faroe Islands. In 2018, more than 110 000 tourists visited the islands. This leaves clear marks on a country which has been marketing itself as being unspoiled and untouched.

The first clear example of this came on 10 August last year, when the person responsible for the path leading to the bird colonies on the island of Mykines decided the path must close. It was too worn, and people’s safety could no longer be guaranteed.

Visit Faroe Islands’ volunteer projects aim to make sure such things do not happen again.

“For us, tourism is more than numbers. Each year we welcome visitors with open arms. But we also have a responsibility for our local population and our beautiful nature which we must protect so that we can secure sustainable and responsible growth in the number of tourists also in future,” said Guðrið Højgaard, Director for Visit Faroe Islands when the “Closed for Maintenance” campaign was launched.

This time, closing the Faroe Islands meant closing ten tourist destinations and performing maintenance on them. The whole thing has been about trying to kill three birds with one stone: maintaining the illusion of the unspoilt green islands, protecting and maintaining fragile areas and attracting more tourists.

The Prime Minister pays

Visit Faroe Islands received 3 500 applications from people all over the world who wanted to volunteer. After two days they had to close the application site. 100 volunteers aged 18 to 75 from 25 different countries were selected. They paid for their own travel to the Faroe Islands, while Faroese authorities paid for food and lodging. Or as Danish Berlingske wrote:

“The Faroese Prime Minister will pay for your stay on the Faroe Islands, if you will help keep the islands clean”. He will do the same next year, because Visit Faroe Islands is planning to repeat the success.



Iceland's tourism becomes a hot environmental topic

Tourists drowning at sea. Tourists dying in bus accidents. Tourists driving illegally off road and getting stuck in the middle of an active geothermal area. They do serious damage to nature just to post pictures of themselves and their tyre tracks on social media.

THEME

27.06.2019

TEXT: GUÐRÚN HELGA SIGURÐARDÓTTIR, PHOTO: INSPIRE BY ICELAND

“I did not know,” they say.

These are some of the problems which now face Iceland's tourism industry. Icelandic nature is under threat, and there might be problems ahead. Tourism has brought new challenges to Iceland.



Rannveig Grétarsdóttir

“When our guests do not respect nature, it’s a negative thing. But it can also be good when other guests see our reactions and realise that bad behaviour will not be tolerated,” says Rannveig Grétarsdóttir, CEO of the whale safari company Elding in Reykjavik.

Iceland’s tourism boom has slowed somewhat since the Icelandic airline WOW’s bankruptcy in the spring. Last year, 2.7 million people visited the island, but that figure is expected to fall this year – partly because of Icelandic currency fluctuations, but mainly because fewer foreign airlines now fly there.

The fall in tourism numbers allows Iceland to think, according to Rannveig Grétarsdóttir. She believes it is important to use this time to develop rules and introduce regulations around visits to Iceland’s many natural attractions.

No future vision

Jón Björnsson, Chief Park Ranger for the Snæfellsjökull national park, says Iceland has lacked the infrastructure needed to accommodate all the guests who have been coming in recent years. He says Iceland’s natural resources have been exploited in an irresponsible way; tourist companies have only been focusing on growth and have failed to think about sustainability and the impact of tourism on the local population.



Jón Björnsson, Chief Park Ranger for the Snæfellsjökull national park. Photo: private

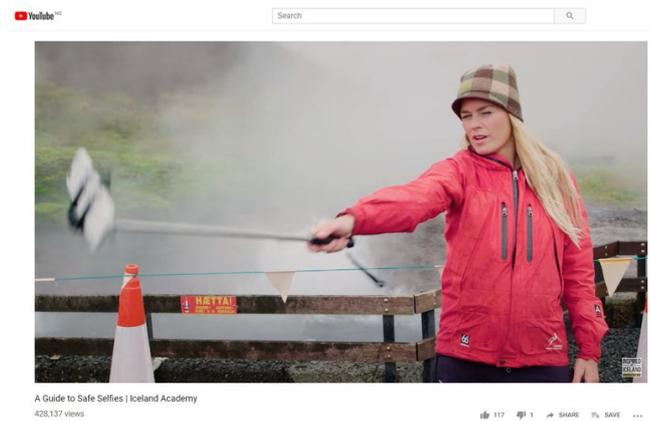
“There is still no future vision within the tourism sector. There is still a lack of knowledge, and in certain areas the locals are about to run out of patience,” says Björnsson.

People in general do understand how important tourism is to Iceland’s economy and to individual households, however.

“Tourism is sometimes bad for the quality of life, but at the same time it does bring in money, and the Icelandic people understand this,” he continues.

The Icelandic Association for Search and Rescue, ICE-SAR, believes foreign guests’ behaviour has changed. Project manager Jónas Guðmundsson says the number of accidents involving tourists has fallen, with the exception of 2018. But Iceland must continue to develop its infrastructure in order to control where foreign visitors go.

“Most visitors behave in a nice and rational manner, except for a small number of social media celebrities,” he says.



As part of its drive to teach tourists to be more responsible, the tourism agency Inspired by Iceland has published a video showing how to take selfies. It has already had more than half a million views.

“We have not had good infrastructure up until now, and so it has been very important for tourism operators to warn tourists and to control the traffic to various places,” he says.

Damage compensation

The Icelandic government has been given a wake-up call. A few years ago there were not enough national park wardens, but this has changed. Tourism authorities are working hard to strengthen regulations for how to protect and control traffic to various areas and how to issue fines if rules are broken.

Nature has suffered, but now there is at least a tool available for stopping problems from arising. Police can now demand compensation for damage resulting from illegal environmental activities.

“I expect us to handle illegal environmental activities far more strictly in future. The government has now understood how important this is,” says Jón Björnsson.

Guðmundur Ingi Guðbrandsson, the Minister for the Environment, thinks Iceland is now in control of tourism’s impact on nature. He says Iceland is investing in viewing spots, toilets and ladders in order to control the traffic and the way visitors interact with nature. The country will now make plans for how tourism and nature will coexist without having a negative impact on the environment. Then there will be a debate on whether the number of visitors to certain areas should be limited.

The climate issue is extremely important to Iceland, while air traffic remains important to Iceland’s largest industry – the tourism sector. The Minister for the Environment believes that the number of foreign visitors might fall, but that they will stay for longer periods of time. Many airlines are also offering CO2 compensation schemes.

“Air traffic represents a large proportion of the total tourism CO2 footprint. You cannot take a train to Iceland, so we are in a special situation,” he explains.

Reorganising air traffic

The government has already developed a climate policy. Iceland will always be dependent on planes to link to the rest of the world, but the idea is to make greater use of video conferencing in order to reduce the number of flights for civil servants, until the aircraft industry starts using more environmentally friendly fuels.

“People in general should also think about how necessary it is to travel abroad as often as they do, or whether it might be possible to combine two journeys into one,” says Guðmundur Ingi.

Rannveig at Elding whale safari thinks Icelanders have not been treating nature all that well in the past, but that people are now ready to change the way they think and act. That is why they react so strongly when foreign guests fail to treat nature with respect. She believes that Iceland still has a long list of things that must be done in order to strengthen Iceland as a tourist destination.

“Icelanders are ready to introduce sustainability into the way we treat nature, but we must act faster,” says Rannveig Grétarsdóttir. She proposes to present to the Icelandic population an overview of what the tourism industry entails, to help Icelanders better understand what tourism is all about.

We will be focusing on nature

The tourism boom became a tsunami that engulfed Iceland. There was an uncontrolled flow of tourists, and the population was not prepared for so many guests. Icelanders started feeling the tourists were in their way. Now that tourism is abating, the government and the people can focus on sustain-

ability, waste recycling and making sure the tourism industry uses renewable energy.

Rannveig Grétarsdóttir believes it is necessary to unite the people in the fight to save the environment, while also achieving a balanced understanding of the tourism industry’s needs.

“In the whale safari business, we always look at how we can develop for the future. We still have to use diesel-powered boats, at least for a while longer. In the meantime we can work on other ways of limiting our company’s impact on nature,” explains Rannveig.

“There are so many things we Icelanders can improve on and work with,” she says.



Sustainable tourism in Åland – no Coca-Cola or Norwegian salmon

Åland was first to implement the Green Key certification scheme for restaurants in Finland. Among the pioneers was Pub Stallhagen, where chef Johanna Dahlgren has done a huge job both as an inspirator and educator.

THEME

27.06.2019

TEXT: HELENA FORSGÅRD, PHOTO: KJELL SÖDERLUND

“Every day I explain why we, for instance, do not serve ice cubes, Coca-Cola, Norwegian farmed salmon or lemons,” she says.

Pub Stallhagen lies nearly in the middle of Åland’s main island, and guests are met by a map over Åland hanging on the wall in the dining hall. It details where the pub’s local providers are – including the farmer who grows potatoes and vegetables, the apple grower who brings apples and freshly pressed juice and the sheep farmer who delivers fresh meat.



Johanna Dahlgren is a trained chef, waiter and economist, and is the managing director of the company that runs the pub restaurant. She chose which path to take from the start, although there really was no choice.

“It felt so obvious. I am born into a food family in the countryside. You harvested, hunted and fished, and made good food out of what you could get hold of. I held on to this way of thinking when I started on my own,” she says.

Once a month at the most

She has grown ever more conscious over time, and applying for the Green Key certification felt like the obvious thing to do when the restaurant was presented with the opportunity. To be accepted, you first have to meet a number of basic requirements. Then you apply to renew the certificate on an annual basis, which means you have to improve all the time. One of the requirements for a restaurant is to make sure as many of the raw ingredients as possible are sourced locally.

“One of our new goals is to serve chicken only once a month, and it has to come from an identified, domestic producer. Last year one of our new goals was to compost all of our food waste, which we now do, and we take the composted soil to one of our vegetable providers. We also try to minimise our energy use,” says Johanna Dahlgren.

Menu according to availability

Stallhagen has one meat, one fish and one vegetarian dish on offer every day, but the menu depends on what has been caught or harvested. This upsets some guests.

“Some groups want to know which fish dish we will be serving when they are planning their visit six months ahead. I cannot answer that. It could be pike fishcakes if our fishermen have caught pike, but it could also be wild whitefish or something else altogether.”

She will never serve Norwegian farmed salmon, however. That would be as out of place as battery chicken in Stallhagen’s food philosophy.

“No lemon with the fish, either – that ‘obligatory slice’ which so often is left untouched on the plate. No lemons grow in Åland. If someone wants soda, we serve Åland varieties like apple juice, but without ice, because making ice uses both water and energy.”

Explaining the choices

All this is not always pain-free.

“I ‘educate’ our guests every day, and explain why we make the choices we make. I have always believed in what I am doing, and over the years my self-confidence has grown to allow me to stick to our chosen path. Some customers might choose not to come, but more and more are becoming aware and appreciate what we are doing. My staff share my values –

those who don’t choose to work elsewhere – and we encourage each other.”



Part of the sustainability idea is to use all the parts of an animal, and not only the choice cuts which normally dominate menus. This means that Stallhagen’s cooks are good at both slow-cooking and a huge variety of mince-based dishes.

There is no children’s menu either, which Johanna says nearly always means sausages and fries, lasagne or hamburger.

“Part of our philosophy is to serve healthy food to all, including children – who just get a smaller portion of our daily dishes.”

Adapted criteria

Emma Lundberg is head of programme for the Green Key certification in Åland. It comprises 12 criteria which companies must fulfil. It was launched in 2014, and 17 companies have been certified so far. Internationally, mainly accommodation businesses are Green Key certified. Åland was the first place in Finland to also certify restaurants.

“All tourism activity in Åland is very small-scale compared to the rest of the world. We have been able to adapt the Green Key criteria to our local conditions – in practical terms, they have become more strict – and are more focused on consumption and resource management,” says Emma Lundberg.

She says consumers can trust that the approved businesses are fulfilling the criteria.

“Businesses are being inspected closely and regularly by an independent inspector. We have seen a sharp increase in the number of businesses that want to join in Åland. We have many who want to start their certification process, but we cannot bring everyone onboard right now. They are still not ready for the changes that are expected,” says Emma Lundberg.



Åland: many travellers, far fewer overnighters

Åland has just under 30 000 citizens, and more than two million annual visitors. This must mean the place is literally swarming with travellers, right?

THEME

27.06.2019

TEXT: HELENA FORSGÅRD, FOTO: KJELL SÖDERLUND

The truth behind the tourism figures is in fact quite different. Numbers from Statistics and Research Åland (ÅSUB) do show that there are some two million visitors to Åland every year and that this has been the case for the past few years. But the great majority of them are travellers who are counted as arriving in Åland despite the fact they have never set foot there.

Do not disembark

More than 770 000 arrive on ships that are on 24-hour cruises starting in Stockholm. They only stay for a brief period of time in the Mariehamn harbour in the early hours of the morning, before returning to Stockholm.

So that leaves just over 1.2 million travellers. Many of them come from Turku or Stockholm on some of the daily passenger ferries that operate all year round. They then change to

other boats in Mariehamn before returning to their starting point on the same day. This group is tempted by the food, entertainment and tax-free shopping onboard. The statistics do not show exactly how big this group really is, since the shipping companies do not provide the figures separately.

Ålanders themselves are believed to carry out around 260 000 journeys every year. Another relatively large group of travellers is people with holiday homes in Åland.

There is a lot passenger ferry traffic to and from Åland, with daily connections to Turku and Helsinki in Finland, Stockholm, Kapellskär and Grisslehamn in Sweden and Tallinn in Estonia. In 2017 there were 9 107 arrivals in Åland's harbours, mostly regular traffic. Foreign cruise ships visiting Åland make up a very small part of that number.

Overnighters

The statistics for people spending the night in Åland shows a different picture – one that is closer to the truth about the “real” tourism. In 2018, 207 600 people stayed in accommodation which is part of ÅSUB statistics. This represented a total of 410 000 nights. Every five years, ÅSUB carries out a survey of tourism’s socio-economic importance to Åland. The latest one was published in 2018, and showed tourism consumption was worth around 105 million euro. If you include consumption onboard vessels owned by Åland-based shipping companies, that number rises to around 330 million euro.

Land-based tourism represented around 2.9% of Åland’s GDP.



Is overtourism a threat to the Nordics, or can the sector become sustainable?

We have all seen the pictures of the queue to get to the top of Mount Everest, gigantic cruise ships docking in Venice and anti-tourist protests in Barcelona. Mass tourism has taken a step towards becoming “overtourism”.

THEME

27.06.2019

TEXT AND PHOTO: BJÖRN LINDAHL

The definition of overtourism is when conflicts arise between local populations and visitors to a tourist destination due to perceived overcrowding. The Nordic countries enjoy more geographical space than most other countries. However, the “allemannsretten” – the right to roam – means tourists can go wherever they like, resulting in damage to nature or to the tourists themselves.

Social media and the selfie culture means visits are concentrated to fewer places. The pop star Justin Bieber recorded a video of himself as he went for a dip in the Icelandic valley of Fjaðrárgljúfur in 2015. He has more than 110 million followers on Instagram, many of whom wanted to visit the same spot. As a result, the valley had to be closed to visitors be-

cause of the damage tourists did to the nature. It was only reopened on 1 June this year.

A flying shame

As tourism creates more problems, the industry also faces mounting criticism due to CO2 emissions created by air travel in particular. But what is worse – the rare, long-haul trips people take a few times in their lives, or the frequent short-haul flights between Oslo and Copenhagen, Stockholm and Helsinki?

The notion of “flight shame” is now spreading across all of the Nordic region. Iceland has used its Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers to focus on sustainable tourism.

The country's tourism industry has grown a lot in the past six years. 2.3 million tourists visited the island in 2017 – seven times the population.

When low-cost airline WOW Air folded in March this year, Iceland got some space to think. The airline had been carrying a large proportion of the tourists arriving in Iceland up until then. Now, Icelandic authorities want to organise tourism in a better way.

The Nordic Labour Journal takes a look at the impact tourism has on Iceland and on the two autonomous areas of Åland and the Faroe Islands. Is there a real will to create a more sustainable tourism industry, or are environmental arguments being used to tempt more tourists to visit?

Strong growth

So far, tourism has enjoyed stronger growth than most other sectors. The statistics are not quite up to date, but 2017 was an unusually good year for the EU tourism industry. It grew by 8% on 2016. 538 million international tourists visited an EU country in that year, which is 40% of the world total. Tourism now represents 10% of the EU's GDP, and employs 9% of the total EU workforce.

Globally, the Chinese spend the most money on tourism – 258 billion US dollars in 2017 according to the World Tourism Organisation. The USA is in second place, but spends less than half – 135 billion US dollars. Germany is number three with 84 billion, the UK with 63 billion and France with 41 billion.

Is there a limit for how many tourists Europe can accommodate? In 1950 there were 25 million foreign overnighters in European countries. That number had risen to 1.2 billion by 2016.

China plays an ever greater role for tourism in the Nordic region too. 356 000 Chinese tourists visited Finland in 2016, a 35% increase. The number of Chinese tourists passing through Keflavik airport in Iceland has risen five-fold in four years.

So how does it look in the Nordic region? The biggest countries had the greatest number of tourists in 2016:

	Number	Income	Increase
Denmark	11 million	6 billion euro	6%
Finland	3 million	2 billion euro	6%
Iceland	2 million	2 miljarder euro	36%
Norway	6 million	-	11%
Sweden	7 million	11 billion euro	13%

Source: European Union Tourism Trends. The figure for income for Norway is lacking.

Tourism of course does not only give income. The inhabitants of a country also spends a lot of money in other countries. In 2016 the Sedes spent 13 billion euro, the Danish 8 billion euro and the Finns 5 billion euro on tourist travelling abroad.

89% of Finns went on holiday either domestically or abroad in 2016. That is the highest number in all of Europe. 28% took a staycation, 5% went abroad while 56% did both.

Sweden is in second place with 82% and Denmark is third with 80% of the population. Half of vacationing Danes – 40 percentage points – only went abroad on holiday. Norway and Iceland are not part of this EU statistic.

OECD statistics for how big a part of a country's GDP tourism represents, show Spain in the lead in 2015, with nearly 11%.

- Iceland was 11th, with 4.6%
- Norway was 19th, with 3.2%
- Sweden was 23rd, with 2.8%
- Finland was 27th, with 2.5%

Denmark is at the bottom of the 34 OECD countries when it comes to tourism's share of GDP, with only 1.7%, according to the World Tourism Organization.

Just how big an impact tourism has, depends on how you measure it. For the environment, it is large number of tourists that matters, but for a small country or an autonomous area, the number of tourists per capita is important. And in certain cases, for instance in Åland, the statistics do not reflect reality because most of the tourists hardly set foot on the island.

The numbers should be treated with some caution, because of fluctuations between local currencies and US dollars. There have also been some changes since the numbers were published. Iceland's big tourism boom reached its zenith in 2018.



Who killed the Nordic model?

If you read Helge Hvid's and Eivind Falkum's book about Work and Wellbeing in the Nordic Countries like a crime story, it becomes exciting. The two editors are trying to establish whether the Nordic model already has died, or is dying. But does the evidence hold?

NEWS

27.06.2019

TEXT AND PHOTO: BJÖRN LINDAHL

It is a tough case to begin with. All international statistics show that the Nordic countries are prosperous, equal and happy. For several decades it has been claimed that "the Nordic model" is the explanation. Hvid and Falkum question that.

"Nothing lasts forever. One day, each and every one of us will agree: the Nordic model, or the Nordic approach as we prefer to call it, is not with us anymore," write the two researchers.

They work, respectively, at Roskilde University in Denmark and the Work Research Institute at OsloMet University in Norway.

Together with 25 other researchers, they look at different aspects of what has been called the Nordic Worklife model

(NWM). Does it still work? Is there really a Nordic Worklife model, or just separate national models with big differences? Are there even national models or are there different models for each sector of society?



Eivind Falkum

“We need to question the idea of a common working life model in Norway, and therefore also in the rest of the Nordics,” write Eivind Falkum, Ida Drange, Heidi Enehaug and Bitten Nordrik in the chapter called “Workplace democracy under pressure”.

Exhibit A

In this chapter there is also what could be called Exhibit A in the case of the demise of the Nordic model. In 2016, the Work Research Institute and five unions launched an annual survey on co-determination. It was repeated in 2017, and some of the questions were also identical to a survey done by Fafo in 2009.

45% of the more than 3 000 respondents answered that “worklife is becoming more authoritarian”.

“At the same time, 10% answered that worklife had become more democratic,” admits Eivind Falkum, when we meet him.

21% of the respondents said “don’t know” and 24% said “no change”.

“There are of course differences among different sectors. Worklife was less democratic in companies where the owners of the companies were foreign. More surprisingly, those who worked in state-owned Norwegian companies and public servants also answered that worklife is becoming more authoritarian.”

The real decisions were made elsewhere

When Falkum and other researchers studied a large multinational company, they found that even though it established all the necessary bodies, it was just a front – the real decisions were made elsewhere. They concluded:

“They ignored collective and representative democratic structures and intentions in practice, while simultaneously stating that they were following the national rules of the game. Lawyers have evaluated the process and concluded in favour of the unions.”

One of the main aspects of the Nordic Worklife model is the tripartite cooperation between the unions, the employers and the government.

“It’s reduced but for different reasons. In Norway it’s the government who wants out, in Denmark the unions and in Sweden it is the employers who have drawn back from the tripartite cooperation,” says Eivind Falkum.

Throughout the book, Sweden keeps popping up. To write about the Nordic model without taking account of what happens in Sweden is hard. Adding a third country doesn’t make the model more uniform.

Here are two of the differences the researchers write about:

- All three countries see it as a priority to have as many young people as possible entering the labour market, with the right education. Vocational education and training is one way to help those who have difficulties. But the models differ a lot between the three countries, with Denmark having the closest ties with workplaces for training, while Sweden has the weakest links.
- The countries differ when it comes to job security. In Denmark, the protection as stipulated in laws and collective agreements is very weak, especially for blue-collar workers, compared to Norway and Sweden.

Showing the differences between the national models is just one way of arguing that it would be more correct to talk of a Nordic approach, than a Nordic model. You could also put the question like this: is prosperity in the Nordics a result of the model, or has prosperity emerged because the countries have been more influenced by neo-liberalism than what is commonly thought?

According to the researchers the Nordic countries:

- Accept the globalisation of the economy.
- Are in favour of flexibility and decentralisation of collective agreements.
- Demand that citizens who cannot support themselves should not just be provided for through social benefits. They should be pulled and pushed towards work.

“We can hardly conclude that the Nordic model has been a protective buffer against neo-liberalism. On the contrary, the model has widely embraced neo-liberalism. And adapted it to ensure its own survival: the social parties do not oppose market forces, they accept and adapt to them,” says Eivind Falkum.

New forms of management

New Public Management (NPM) and Lean are two forms of management that are closely studied, which could be threats to workplace democracy. Looking at how NPM has been introduced in elderly care in Denmark, Agnete Meldgaard and

Anette Kamp, the consequence is undoubtedly that elderly care has been reorganised according to rationales of increased marketisation, economic efficiency and standardisation.

But the two researchers also show that resistance to NPM sometimes has been successful.

“Taking elderly care as a case, we would argue that that Nordic NPM may provide possibilities to retain autonomy and professionalism, but we also show that it may not be without costs in terms of struggles, emotional strain and self-intensification.”

Writing about Lean management, Peter Hagedorn-Rasmussen and Pål Klethagen refer to research that concludes “that there is no straightforward way to judge the influence of Lean on work environment: it is possible to have a positive work environment with Lean and even improve ---.”

Still alive?

Looking from the opposite side there are also many signs that the Nordic model is alive and kicking:

- In Denmark, about 75% of private sector employees are covered by collective agreements, and in the public sector 100% are covered. Similar figures for Norway are 57% in the private sector and 100% in the public sector.
- The 1.5 million members of collective labour unions in Denmark are represented by shop stewards in the workplaces. All in all there are 50 000 union representatives.
- When it comes to the psychosocial and organisational working environment, as many as 94% of Norwegian workers, 91% of Danish workers and 86% of EU workers are satisfied with their working conditions.

“I hope that the book will give a more nuanced view of the Nordic model. There has been too little dissidence. We want to treat it with some scepticism, says Eivind Falkum.



Mapping the mental border obstacles between Denmark and Sweden

Preconceptions, experiences, habits and feelings can prevent businesses from working across national borders. Ethnologist Fredrik Nilsson says that besides money, a lot of emotions are being invested in cross-border work.

NEWS

20.06.2019

TEXT: FAYME ALM, PHOTO: BJÖRN LINDAHL

Cross-border work is often thought of as something that concerns only lawyers and administrators, but there are many more players involved. Just like barriers between countries exist both inside and outside of a country's legal framework. That is the conclusion from two reports on border obstacles published by The Institute of Öresund.

“Cross-border work is not something that is only being done by customs officials. We are all involved when we work or speak with them across the border. Or when we talk about The Others over dinner,” says Fredrik Nilsson, Professor of Ethnology at Lund University. He has contributed to both reports.



*Fredrik Nilsson, professor of ethnology at Lund University.
Photo: Kennet Ruona.*

This is about feelings on a relationship level, not on a national level where you are proud of your country, points out Fredrik Nilsson.

“There is an ongoing narrative around the border, where the emotional side is important. It is not only money that is invested in frontier work, but a lot of emotions too.”

Four mental border obstacles

Four examples of border obstacles between Sweden and Denmark emerged from the in-depth interviews which were carried out for the report:

1. The national gravitational pull and the feeling of “us and them”, exemplified by language differences, national news priorities and national culture consumption.
2. Differences or perceived differences in business culture.
3. The fact that social networks rarely reach across Öresund.
4. The perceived high threshold to and lack of knowledge of “the other market”.

Border landscape with different functions

Fredrik Nilsson also noticed all the emotions when he read the interviews in the Öresund report. That is why he chose to call his epilogue ‘In the mood for business’.

“Feelings were integrated into the stories told by the business people in the report. Feelings are being invested, they have an effect and become the product of cross-border relations. The border landscape also becomes an emotional landscape with several players and with emotional investments,” he says.

Fredrik Nilsson compares the border to an engine with an emotional function, a border that makes us want to meet something different and to long for the other side.

“The border can be a productive force, with a longing which creates movement – and in the best of cases a meeting with the other, which means prejudices can disappear. In the worst case, it leads to disappointment. If expectations are not met, the border gets harder to cross again,” says Fredrik Nilsson.

The monolith as border guard

Such disappointments can strengthen the stereotypical image of The Others by turning into a monolith which people must relate to, rather than looking beyond the stereotype.

“The monolith becomes a strong border guard, which really stops people from crossing over to the other side and makes them turn inwards to the national level,” he says.

Fredrik Nilsson believes cross-border work becomes even more dynamic and complex when you also take the emotional side of things into consideration. He ends the interview by expressing hope that he can continue to investigate how different factors influence cross-border work.

“The emotional part is important. That is why we need to learn more about how feelings, culture and economy come together.”

Mental barriers also between Norway and Sweden

The report, which was published last year, has had a positive reception at Grensetjänsten Norge – Sverige (a cross-border information service for Norwegian and Swedish citizens and companies).



“Some people got confirmation of what they had been thinking already. Others gained new knowledge about the mental obstacles that exist across the national border,” says Trond Erik Grundt, the head of Grensetjänsten.

Sandra Forsén, head of business at Öresunddirect Sweden, says the recently published Öresund report makes it easier for the organisation to spread knowledge about what it is like to operate as a business in the Danish-Swedish border region.

“The report highlights the soft border obstacles which are not of a purely legal or administrative nature but linked to people’s experiences and prejudices. There is a need to discuss the ideas which we carry with us in our daily work. Partly to

bust the myths, partly to understand the mindset on the other side of the sound. If you do that, you can reap benefits for your business.”