The Nordic Countries' 'Exceptionalism' in EU Environmental Policy

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Abstract: *The Nordic countries have a long tradition of regional cooperation. The end of the Cold War and the subsequent accession of Finland and Sweden to the European Union created the necessity to redefine the nature of this collaboration model. The traditional pattern of Nordic 'exceptionalism' could no longer be applied and the Nordic countries have gradually turned to the European Union as the main arena for not only the promotion of their national but also regional interests. While the Europeanisation of Nordic cooperation has, to some extent, diluted the original model of Nordic 'exceptionalism,' defined as being better than the others but also a model that could be applied elsewhere, it has also affected the European Union, where the Nordic countries have to some extent 'nordicised' the EU. The paper uses the example of Nordic countries' effect on the EU environmental policy to show how sub-regions in the EU might shape European policies.*

Keywords: *Nordic exceptionalism, EU environmental policies, Nordic cooperation*

The Nordic countries often utilise their long tradition of regional[1] cooperation in various international forums. Decades of collaboration in the Nordic Council led to the harmonisation of national legislation in areas of low politics and the subsequent efforts to promote common goals globally. In the post-Cold War era, the European

Union (EU) has become a dominant arena and instrument of these efforts. The coordination of national representations' positions allows the subsequent approximation of promoted goals often based on frequent contacts between their administrations.[2] All Nordic countries consider environmental policy a key national interest that they strive to endorse at all levels of international negotiations. As early as 1982, during the negotiations on the protection of the stratospheric ozone layer, Denmark (that Andrew Jordan and Andrea Lenschow label as the European Union's greenest state) (Jordan and Lenschow 2000: 109), Finland, Norway and Sweden collectively aspired to introduce the internationally most rigorous binding directives. Jussi Raumolin labelled the Nordic countries as 'environmentally benign' (Lindell and Karagozoglu 2001: 39), while Claes Bernes called them countries 'which are deeply concerned about the environmental policies' (Lindell and Karagozoglu 2001: 39).

The Nordic countries have managed to substantially affect EU legislation regarding environmental policy, and as such they represent a rather illustrative example of how small states[3] can usefully utilise their coalition potential for pursuing a policy that they consider part of their key national interest, while building on their experience with regional cooperation. The Nordic countries comprise something that can be called the Nordic region, or, in the context of the EU, a sub-region. The Nordic region can be understood in the sense employed by Iver B. Neumann or Carina Keskitalo, who argue that it developed as 'a choice made on specific historical and political grounds' (Keskitalo 2007: 108). Thus, the region is in this view not a given but constructed. This approach assumes that the people in the region have some sense of collective identity and/or share certain characteristics as a pre-condition for the construction of the region. The theory of constructivism puts primary emphasis on the importance of language as a shared characteristic while 'the creation of a region must be seen as a political act and traced to historical developments, situations and activities of certain groups that have brought it into being (Neumann, cited in Keskitalo 2007: 188). Accordingly, the role of elites is crucial for the success of constructing a region. The developments in the Nordic region support the premises of this theory as we can find similar language, common historical and institutional characteristics, and the active involvement of elites in constructing the region and deepening the cooperation within definite established limits.

The Nordic countries share certain economic, political, cultural, social and geographical characteristics. As a region they include Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, as a sub-region in the EU then only Denmark, Finland and Sweden since Iceland and Norway are not members of the EU.[4] They are considered to be the 'most similar systems' with specific institutional, ideological and political features that distinguish them from the rest of the world (Ingebritsen 1998: 54). Lee Miles identifies seven shared characteristics: parliamentary democracy, competitive market economy, welfare state policies (including a high standard of social policy, environ-

mental protection and open democracy), commitment to national sovereignty and a strong national defence, internationalism, emphasis on an open global economy, and close attachment to the Nordic identity (Miles 1996: 7–8). Carl-Einar Stålvant defines them as small, homogenous, rich, secular, industrially advanced and with the exception of Denmark scarcely populated countries with similar political and economic institutions and party systems, with similar culture, language (except for Finnish and Saami) and shared history (Stålvant 1990: 126). All this has developed into the concept of 'nordicity,' a term that appeared after World War II and summarized the above-mentioned characteristics and the perceived notion of uniqueness or even Nordic 'exceptionalism,' which according to Christopher Browning became not only part of the Nordic regional but also national identity of the Nordic states. This sense of 'exceptionalism' often implied not only being better than the others but also a model that could be 'implemented elsewhere' and this combination of creating an image of 'nordism' while aiming at 'exporting' the values led to the development of a 'Nordic brand.'[5]

We should not, though, consider them identical systems as while we can find many similar features, they are individual countries with individual characteristics. The Nordic region combines cooperation with competition where partnership/inspiration and competitiveness/rivalry are two sides of the same equation. As cooperation widens and deepens, it also presents a growing range of areas that they cannot agree on. In this respect, we need to distinguish between perceived and actual level of cooperation, because what Browning calls 'marketing of the Nordic brand' (Browning 2007: 31) might not always be fully matched with reality, i.e., the Nordic countries keep separate national identities and whilst in some areas such as social policy or environmental protection, we witness high levels of cooperation, they pursue individual paths in many other, which can also be witnessed in the European Union.

None of the Nordic countries is a strong supporter of European integration, which was for a long time perceived as incompatible with the Nordic model of welfare state and the neutrality of Sweden and Finland. Intergovernmental Nordic cooperation through the Nordic Council was for decades seen as a suitable alternative successful due to its sector policy nature (cooperation and integration in areas of low-politics). The changes in international relations in the early 1990s opened a new debate on the future of Nordic cooperation and the relationship between the EU and the four Nordic countries outside of the EU. Finland and Sweden entered the EU in 1995 joining Denmark, which became a member in 1973 and leaving Norway and Iceland behind. This development led to the gradual Europeanisation of Nordic cooperation, when it had to re-define itself because their designation as 'peaceful societies' was losing importance in the post-Cold War era. Nordic cooperation in the EU was perceived as a new impetus to Nordic cooperation and is a key source of the Nordic platform today.

The European Union as an arena of Nordic cooperation became even more salient as the efforts of Nordic countries to continue with their Cold War role of mediators in international conflicts became increasingly sidelined, which culminated in the post-September 11th world (Browning 2007: 37). As a result, the Nordic countries have increasingly turned to the EU as a source of multiplying their power and promoting their national interests not only in security and foreign policy issues but in sector policies as well. Browning argues, however, that the EU has been affected too, so Nordic cooperation is becoming more Europeanised while the EU is becoming more 'Nordicized' (Browning 2007: 40). According to Katie Laatikaninen, this development makes the Nordic model less distinguishable and erodes its 'exceptionalism' (Laatikainen, citied in Browning 2007: 40), which, however, needs to be understood in pre-1990 terms.

The 1990s signalled a transformation of Nordic cooperation into a pattern more compatible with the new realities and especially focusing on the European Union. The Nordic countries have tried to work together to put their preferences across and move them to the top of the EU agenda. In other forums (United Nations, Council of Europe, etc.) they maintain the traditional level of cooperation if the EU has not adopted a common position. This indicates that European integration does not need to obliterate regional cooperation and its patterns and modes of conduct but it might alter their agendas. If they are able to adapt to the new conditions of cooperation, the European Union can ensure their survival even though it, in itself, cannot help being influenced at the same time. (Sub)regional integration should not serve the goal of forming voting blocs or permanent coalitions in the EU but to coordinate the positions of mainly small and medium size countries with their partners, and in this way strengthen their position in the enlarged European Union while increasing the transparency and predictability of the EU decision-making system. Browning asserts that in this respect, the Nordic sub-region 'remains a front runner and potential model' (Browning 2007: 37) for other EU Member States and the other European sub-regions.

The success of this approach has been documented by research on the cooperation of Member States in the EU and the coalitions in the Council. Peter Silárszky and René Levínský and also Mika Widgrén consider the Nordic countries one of the EU sub-systems, which Philippe De Schoutheete defined as: groups of countries that tend to form coalitions in the EU Council more often than others and Peter Silárszky and René Levínský as: permanent and predictable cooperation between two or more countries.[6] For Bruce Russett Nordic regionalism represents one similar to that of the Benelux, the two sub-systems *par excellence*. He argues that both the Nordic countries and the Benelux were exposed to attacks or protection of neighbouring powers. Their fate depended on the ability to cooperate so as to increase their manoeuvring space and ensure autonomy from external threats. He labels both as effective EU sub-systems (Russet,

cited in Stålvant 1990: 134). Several authors have confirmed that the Nordic countries form coalitions with each other more often than with other countries (Widgrén 1993: 334–335), which can be observed, for example, in environmental policy issues, social policy or indirect taxation (Hosli 1996: 260).

However, that does not mean that they do not contact other countries as their number of votes in Council requires support of many more Member States. Simply, in some issues they tend to pre-negotiate their positions before looking for other partners required to pass, amend or stop, the proposed legislation.[7] The Nordic countries have been identified by a number of scholars and policy-makers as a 'natural' coalition of countries in the EU Council for their long tradition of compromise and shared interests in certain policy sectors. Even though the countries themselves deny a coordinated effort to form stable coalitions, their long history of regional cooperation that allows the coordination of positions on a pool of shared interests increases their ability to jointly put across those preferences that they share and in which they have traditionally collaborated. If we refrain from calling them a voting bloc, which cannot be confirmed by the data obtained from the voting records of the EU Council, we could call them a group of countries that often combine their powers to promote goals that they consider shared interests.

In the case of the environmental policy, the Nordic countries utilise their pattern of cooperation combined with an early interest in the policy and the consequent long and rich experiences with environmental protection and the efforts to promote it nationally, regionally (Nordic Council, EU) and globally (UN). They carry the reputation of environmental forerunners both in their domestic policies and in their international activities in various forums. The experience also serves a utility function as they can offer business solutions developed by Nordic companies to some environmental problems. The scientific expertise and knowledge helps them collect evidence and offer solutions. When the former Swedish Minister for environment, Anna Lindh, commented on the success to include producer responsibility into the auto/oil EU Directive, she said: 'The small countries won with facts.' (Kronsell 2002: 295)

For the Nordic countries, the European Union is a significant arena for the promotion and endorsement of their priorities in environmental policy as it can be considered one of the leading promoters of environmental protection in the world and as it multiplies their strength as individual and/or sub-regional actors. Some authors believe that the *acquis* regulating the environmental policy are some of the greatest successes of European integration (Sbragia 1993: 337). Jürgen Gerhards and Holger Lengfeld assert that for the European Union today, 'environmental protection and policies on CC [climate change] are as important as freedom of movement, social market economy, and gender equality rights' (Gerhards and Lengfeld 2008: 337).

The EC environmental policy originally developed without a legal basis in the EC primary law. The interest in environmental protection increased in the late 1960s and during the 1970s. France became the first country to establish a special state

ministry to cover environmental issues. France also swayed the other Member States (MS) to discuss environmental concerns during the 1972 EC summit, which received support mainly from Germany and the Netherlands, the two MS with the most stringent national standards in environmental protection. Their business lobbies were worried that they could be at an economic disadvantage if other MS would not have to apply the same rules as their national legislation required. The other MS first opposed, claiming that such policy would hamper international trade but step by step the EC adopted a position that transnational character of pollution requires not only national but also international (and supranational) solutions.

Following the 1972 summit, an Environmental Council was set up in 1973 and throughout the 1970s met once a year. The same year the Council adopted the first Action programme[8] for the years 1973 till 1977.[9] The fundamental change was introduced by the Single European Act (SEA) that institutionalised the policy and strengthened the competencies of the European Parliament, which was to become the 'greenest' European Union's institution (Lindholm n.d.: 13). The Maastricht Treaty extended qualified majority voting to almost all areas of environmental policy, to which the co-decision procedure would now also apply. Finally, in the 2007 Lisbon Treaty, the EU competences were further extended to include climate change and the fight against global warming as goals of the European Union. The enlargement by ten new Member States in 2004 and two more in 2007 were significant in extending EU's competencies in environmental policy to twelve more countries. The EU played a key role in adopting the UN Kyoto protocol in 1997, launched a Climate Change Programme in 2000 and the European Council adopted another vital decision related to climate change in 2007.[10]

Nordic countries — together with Germany and the Netherlands, are considered the forerunners in environmental protection. Walter Korpi argued that it could be attributed to a working-class mobilisation, which led to the emergence of a strong state that is able to affect the 'distributional consequences of capitalism' (Korpi, cited in Gough 2008: 335), John Dryzek believes that if Korpi was right, these premises created a situation where the Nordic countries are able to cope with the environmental consequences of capitalism. The fact that they are able to does not mean that they will. He notes that in Northern Europe this was accompanied by the so called ecological modernisation based on the principle that pollution prevention pays economically because pollution means that the resources are used inefficiently and the 'economy benefits from a clean environment with happy and healthy workers' (Dryzek, cited in Gough 2008: 335).

Lyle A. Skruggs notes that for political scientists, 'ecological modernization will occur if sufficient societal, political, administrative, and organizational capacity is available' (Andersen 2002: 1395). Another approach highlights the importance of changing the behaviour of individual consumers so that they start to make more

sustainable choices: 'individual consumers are seen as powerful market actors who use their purchasing power to bring about social change by taking into account the environmental consequences of their private consumption' (Moisander, cited in Autio and Heinonen 204: 141). Rauno Sairinen calls it an 'environmentally mobilized population' (Sairinen 2001: 130). While some argue that this approach loses importance if ecological modernisation becomes wide-spread because we do not need to make that many choices since the goods produced are environment — and sustainable development — friendly, the two need to develop simultaneously so that they incorporate both the 'individual and organizational level,' i.e., citizens, companies and public authorities (Sairinen 2001: 130).

Ecological modernisation theory argues that environmental protection will be achieved through pressure on businesses. Companies using environment friendly technologies will lower their production costs and increase product quality so they will benefit from the process. First, this approach focused on large, multi-national companies, who had the resources, but more recently the potential of smaller businesses has also been explored. The Nordic countries — together with Germany, the Netherlands and Japan, have the highest ranking in ecological modernisation in the world, much higher than the UK, France or the USA. The Nordic countries do not only have objectively high levels of ecological modernisation but are also perceived as leaders in this policy by other countries in the EU and their public is generally aware of their individual responsibility as consumers and citizens.[11]

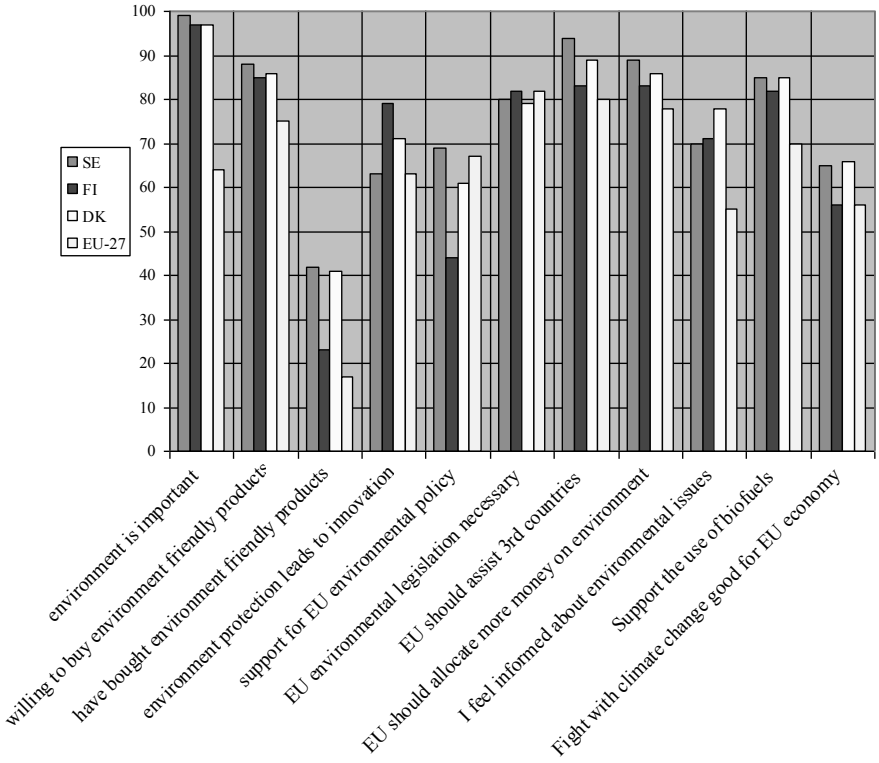
We can find evidence that a combination of both approaches has been undertaken in the Nordic countries. The Nordic governments have actively engaged in their development. Creating an environmentally aware population and motivating businesses to introduce environmental friendly practices through innovation and regulation, they endorsed the view that both complement each other. Denmark, for example, started in the 1970s to implement measures that would regulate consumer behaviour regarding energy, when, in order to save energy, campaigns, direct regulation, and subsidy schemes were introduced to affect consumer behaviour. The same approach was taken later on, when the issues of acidification and the greenhouse effect started to appear high on the agenda. Denmark again applied the consumer-oriented approach. In the 1970s and 1980s, environmental social groups started to emerge, many of whom moved to the countryside and started to grow organic food and by 1989 managed to convince the Danish government to launch an organic food labelling scheme.

As for the businesses, an extensive survey conducted by Bjarne Ytterhus and Terje Synnestvedt discovered in 1995 that the managers of Nordic companies indicated that their national governments were imposing the strictest measures on them (FI 97 %, NO 94 %, SE 90 %), followed by customers (FI 65 %. NO 51 %, SE 52 %), and in the case of Finland and Sweden by employees (29 % and 58 % respectively) and

in Norway by managers (44 %). They concluded that managers started to address the environmental concerns, which could be observed mainly in large companies (Lindell and Kragozoglu 2001: 41), while also supporting innovation. Consequently, 'Nordic companies have been able to develop innovative solutions and technologies, which enable them to meet emission requirements while at the same time lowering their operating costs' (Lindell and Kragozoglu 2001: 43). Thus, they increased their competitiveness because they not only used environmental production technologies but also lowered their production costs, which was becoming increasingly important as not only citizens of the Nordic countries but also of Europe generally were becoming more aware of the environmental changes and became more environmentally conscious.

While the Nordic public belongs to the rather eurosceptic group in the EU, environmental policy has significant support in the Nordic countries. As such, the support for European environmental policy has been utilised by their national governments to promote EU membership and to indicate its advantages. When assessing the public opinion and environment in the Nordic countries, recent Eurobarometer studies show that environment is personally very or fairly important to 99 % Swedes (SE) and 97 % Danes (DK) and Finns (FI), which is high above the EU-27 average (64 %). All three countries have above average indexes of actions that individuals have undertaken to protect the environment (EU-27 2.6, DK 3.1, SE and FI 3.3). Results in these three countries demonstrate the highest percentage of people who are willing to buy environmentally friendly products and Denmark and Sweden also display a relatively high number of respondents who have done so in the past. Finland's score is relatively low (23 %) on this one but still above EU average.[12] Danish and Swedish citizens also articulate relatively high support for the combined European and national level of environmental policy and almost a third in each country believes that it should be a sole European responsibility (SE 37 %, DK 29 %, EU-27 54 %). Given the comparatively high euroscepticism in these countries, it indicates how high a level of trust the EU has in handling environmental issues in these two countries. The Finnish case is interesting because while the Finns seem to be more sceptical of the EU environmental policy, they at the same time believe that European environmental legislation is necessary for protecting the environment and consider EU targets more positively than Denmark and Sweden do.[13]

Table 1



Source: Special Eurobarometr 295 (2008) "Attitudes of European Citizens towards the Environment", Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_295_en.pdf (Accessed on 7. January 2009).
Special Eurobarometer 300 (2008) "Europeans´ Attitudes towards Climate Change" Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_300_full_en.pdf (Accessed on 15. January 2009)

All three countries have above-average scores on answers that the EU should assist non-EU countries in improving environmental standards and that the EU should allocate more money to the protection of the environment. The citizens also feel very informed about environmental issues so it is not surprising that their citizens also feel most informed about causes and consequences of climate change and the means to fight it (together with the Netherlands) (Special Eurobarometr 300 2008: 19). On the list of actions taken that fight climate change, all three countries scored above the EU-27 average on almost all items. The highest number of Danes mentioned reducing consumption of energy at home (EU-27 64 %, DK 80 %) and of Finns and Swedes separating waste for recycling (EU-27 76 %, FI 71 %, SE 85 %).

With the support of the public and the need to 'sell' EU membership to the domestic electorate, the priority position of the environmental policy can be documented by the high profile declarations and programmes of national governments and the Nordic Council. The salience the Nordic countries assign to the EU is clearly visible in for example the document published by the Swedish Ministry of Environment called *Sweden and the Environment after 10 years in the EU*, where it states that the 'EU is a key and important political arena. In the environmental area it is obvious — probably more obvious than in most other areas — that it requires decisions on the European level in order to set the problem right. Cross-border pollution must be handled with cross-border political decisions.' The document further states that the Swedish government prioritises environmental policy in the EU with the aim of 'developing the most progressive environmental policy in the EU.'[14]

The prioritisation of environment in the EU comes forward also during the negotiations in the European Union Council and is especially visible during the EU presidencies held by the Nordic countries — the Danish presidency represented the EU during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 declaring the environment and the promotion of 'green' lifestyle as its main goals there; in 2006 Finland included in its presidency's priorities energy policy and climate protection; Sweden is also planning to put a lot of emphasis on environmental policy in its upcoming presidency in the second half of 2009. The current government of Fredrik Reinfeldt considers environmental policy, mainly climate protection, a key governmental interest in the EU.

These activities have a tangible impact on EU legislation. One of the recent big successes of coordinated effort of Nordic countries in the EU was the adoption of a new regulation on chemical substances, REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals). As early as 2005 the Danish Nordic Council presidency programme mentioned the need to allocate special resources to the implementation of projects related to REACH. Nordic countries were asked by Denmark to jointly speed up the process of testing the impact of chemicals on the health of citizens and on the environment in order to be able to present the conclusions to the Commission and the other EU MS.[15] Their expertise served as a vital background for the Regulation, which was considered mainly their victory. The initiative was based predominantly on a Swedish proposal and utilised Swedish expertise in the area.

The importance the environment has for the Nordic countries was further acknowledged by organising the 2009 UN Summit on climate in Copenhagen. The Danish government led by Anders Fogh Rasmussen and the Minister for Climate and Energy, Connie Hedegaard, hope that the negotiations will result into an ambitious agreement on the protection of the world climate — and that Denmark will be able to offer its new, environment-friendly technologies there (Larsen). All Nordic countries are preparing for this event, individually and in mutual collaboration in

the Nordic Council and in the EU. Their ambitious plan is to obtain higher international commitments to environmental protection, mainly from the USA, India, China and Japan (Silberstein 2008). At the end of October 2008, the Nordic ministers of environment met in Helsinki, where they discussed what they as a group expected from the 2009 Climate Summit and how they as regional cooperation and individual countries could contribute to an agreement.

While Nordic countries cooperate in environmental issues, they often choose diverse ways and objectives, which provides them with the opportunity to offer alternative solutions to the discussed problems. For example, while Norway and Sweden both have legislation that ensures public access to information about the environmental impact of companies, Denmark introduced a different approach from that of Norway and Sweden (Nyquist 2003: 12–25). The legislation differs in what type of information should be disclosed, which companies are covered and what the purposes of the legislation are. As a result, the Danish approach seems to target the society in general while Norway and Sweden are focusing more on the financial consequences of environmental impacts even though all three target mainly companies that have substantial effect on the environment. The objectives differ too, while Denmark and Norway aim at the companies introducing environmental improvements, in Sweden the main goal is to raise environmental consciousness of the industry. The significance of expertise is particularly important in the case of environmental policy, which is highly scientific and requires a great deal of technical and scientific knowledge that is not easy or cheap to obtain. The Nordic countries' experience provides many good lessons to the EU and its MS, which the Nordics are very aware of and use as leverage in negotiations.

As stated above, the Nordic countries cooperate when they find a common platform for their preferences and then seek support of other Member States that would support their positions. When examining the 2006 and 2007 notes from Council meetings, we often find that they cooperated with the Netherlands, Austria, the UK, and Germany, but at times find support in countries that are less expected to cooperate with Nordic countries on environmental issues, such as Portugal.[16]

There is though also a number of areas, which Nordic countries do not agree on and are forced to look for partners in other Member States — in October 2007 negotiations on sustainable development, for instance, Sweden cooperated with the Netherlands when demanding that environmental issues related to consumption and production should be taken into consideration during public procurement and with Italy on demanding that it was linked with more energy effectiveness.[17] In March 2007, on the proposal of amending the directive 2003/87/EG establishing a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading, Finland together with France, Italy, Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, Malta and Spain demanded that periphery regions are taken into consideration in the amendment while Finland also promised to prepare

a proposal in this respect. On the same proposal, Sweden and Belgium argued that impact on a region is important but should not be included in this directive.[18]

We can assert that environment has high and rising salience both in the domestic and international activities of the Nordic countries. They are convinced that they can present their international partners with an alternative model of economic growth that minimizes the negative effects on the environment. As the general secretary of the Nordic Council of Ministers, Halldór Ásgrímsson noted, 'The climate, environment and energy, are areas all the Nordic governments will prioritise in the future in order to face up to the challenges posed by globalisation.'[19] We can, consequently, identify here the Nordic pattern of 'exceptionalism' believing that they are 'better than the rest' and simultaneously trying to implement their 'better' way in other countries. To illustrate how successful the Nordic countries have been in carrying through their national interests in the EU environmental policy, we present the following case study — the policy of sustainable development.

The concept of sustainable development does not have a clear date to which we can trace its origins. It was introduced by the World Conservation Strategy in 1980 but started to receive wider attention in 1987, when the World Commission for Environment and Development issued a report called *Our Common Future*, which defined sustainable development as the inevitability 'to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'[20] The Brundtland Report as it became known (after its chairwoman, Gro Harlem Brundtland from Norway) added social justice to ecological modernisation merging environmental and social policies. It acknowledged that environmental pollution was related to a wide range of economic activities such as transportation, agriculture, tourism, etc. Thus, efforts to protect the environment should be connected with economic activities. Furthermore, it stated that environment had social implications in terms of equity, empowerment, accessibility, and participation.[21] Accordingly, environment and social justice were here closely interlinked.

The support for the policy of sustainable development came to the forefront of international interest after the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Human Development in Rio de Janeiro, which followed after the Brundtland Report. This conference gave impetus to the establishment of Agenda 21 preparing an outline until 2050 and drew the attention of governments all around the world to the need to actively support sustainable development. Agenda 21 required that as regards companies, their operations should be directed towards sustainable development, and it 'require[d] environment to be integrated in all decision-making' (Helminen 2000: 197).

The Nordic welfare states have been rather successful in merging their system of social justice with environmental protection and in including environment into various governmental policies. We have seen similar development in the European

Union in the second half of the 1990s,[22] which resulted in the Treaty of Amsterdam formally declaring that environmental integration contributed to sustainable development. Sustainable development became one of the key goals of European integration. The Treaty says that the goal of the Community is to promote a 'high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, the raising of the standard of living and quality of life, and economic and social cohesion and solidarity among Member States.'

This development was coupled with earlier progress in individual EU policies such as regional policy, where since 1994 MS had to comply with environmental rules when drafting their plans for regional development. In 1996, Objective 2 programmes (applicable to regions undergoing economic and social conversion) introduced 'guidelines for environmental integration' (Clement 2005: 296). Integration between Structural funds and the environmental measures was extended in 1998 and then in 1999 the European Parliament approved new regulations for regional policy highlighting the salience of environment and sustainable development in regional development.[23] In the next programming period 2000–2006, sustainable development became a 'horizontal principle for all Structural Funds instruments, projects must demonstrate not only that they respect the environment, but also that greater consideration is given to the interrelationship between economic, social and environmental dimensions' (Clement 2005: 298).

The European Council summits continued to reinforce this universal approach: the 1998 Cardiff Summit concluded that all key Commission proposals should also include the evaluation of environmental impact, the 1998 Vienna Summit asked the Commission to prepare an evaluation on how environmental policy could potentially create new jobs and the 1999 Helsinki Summit ended with the Commission being asked to prepare a proposal for long-term coordination strategy that would link the environmental sustainability with economic and social development. Sustainable development was included in the methodology for evaluating the development of structural funds.

Consequently, the Commission's Directorate-General for the Environment started to financially support the evaluation of structural funds financed projects' contribution to the environment, which led to higher awareness of the necessity to take into consideration the assessment of the previous and future impacts of regional policy on sustainable development. The Finnish contribution has been crucial in this respect as the results of the research in this field supplied by the Finnish representation provided new instruments, evaluation processes and methods for improving the current processes, which were subsequently included in the EU methodology. The current EU strategy for sustainable development was adopted during the 2001 Goteborg Summit under the Swedish presidency under the title *EU Strategy for Sustainable Development*. It proposed 'decoupling growth from resource consumption and

reducing the use of energy and materials,' which was seen as one of the instruments addressing the issues raised at the summits in Nice, Lisbon and Stockholm regarding poverty, social exclusion and ageing population (Clement and Hansen 2001).

The Nordic countries have attempted to utilize the opportunities for promoting sustainable development provided both by the European Union and the United Nations. The UN has been a traditional arena for their coordinated efforts and the level of cooperation has been rather high there. That was translated not only into the appointment of two general secretaries from the Nordic countries (Trygve Lie and Dag Hammarskjöld) but also the fact that the Head of the World Commission on the Environment and Development, who 'helped to popularise the concept of sustainable development,' was Norwegian Gro Harlem Brundtland (future Prime Minister), and that a high number of Nordic citizens in the UN hold executive leadership positions (about 10 % since the 1970s) (Laatikainen 2003: 410). In the case of both the EU and UN, we can sense the support for these organisations originating from the premise of small states that multilateralism guarantees the rights of small countries (Hjelm-Wallen, cited in Laatikainen 2003: 414) emphasised already by Dag Hammerskjöld, who said that it was not the big powers that needed the UN for their protection but the smaller states (Urquhart, cited in Laatikainen 2003: 414). The Nordic countries have systematically used these arenas for promoting their national interests and their values, which has been particularly visible with environmental policy and sustainable development. As Browning argues, they 'were rather successful in marketing a 'Nordic brand' on the international scene' (Browning 2007: 29), which is complemented with the public opinion support — the Nordic countries population is very sympathetic towards sustainable development and most sympathetic in the EU.[24] The Nordic countries also score very high on the global survey of sustainable development, Sweden appeared on the top, Norway was third, Finland fourth, Iceland sixth and Denmark fourteenth.[25]

The reasonably early focus on sustainable development and the awareness of environmental impact of companies and industry on the environment in the Nordic countries has led to innovative behaviour of many Nordic companies with a substantial support from the consumers. As a result, Nordic businesses and scientists can provide the EU and its MS with expertise and it also provides them with increased competitiveness in the increasingly more environmentally aware European market. The first country to focus on seeking new initiatives supporting sustainable development was Finland and the interest soon spread to other Nordic countries that tried to present a common set of evidence that progress had been made before the UN World summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 (Clement and Hansen 2001: 93).

In 1998 the Prime Ministers of the Nordic countries published a joint declaration, *A Sustainable Nordic Region*, with basic guidelines that the countries should mutually pursue under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Ministers

for Nordic cooperation and Environment of not only the five countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) but also Åland Islands, Faroe Islands and Greenland prepared a strategy operational since 2001, which focused on shared goals translated into real policies through the Nordic cooperation institutions. Keith Clement and Malin Hansen believe that this was 'expected to bring considerable advantages for economic development, competitiveness and employment, delivering new technologies and competences, and potentially leading to the creation of new markets for Nordic products and services' (Clement and Hansen 2001: 23). The programme known as *New Bearing for the Nordic Countries* was supplemented by additional projects such as the *Action programme Spatial Planning* as an instrument for sustainable development, and *Action Programme 2001–2004.* Apart from the support of the political elites and business leaders, the strategy targeted local action groups, NGOs and citizens.[26] Some believe that it is the shared heritage that provides a breeding ground for Nordic cooperation in this area. Keith Clement and Malin Hansen claim that 'similarities between the Nordic countries with regard to social structure, cultural background and the importance attached to promoting the quality of life have facilitated collective formal moves towards a common policy on sustainable development' (Clement and Hansen 2001: 21).

However, their experience was not uniform and changed over time. Keith Clement found out that Danish regional policy in the 1980s was focusing mainly on economic measures and started to change only in the 1990s while the Swedish policy after accession had very broad references to only the environment. On the other hand, Finland saw environment as a 'mainstream factor in regional development policy' and as such was included in areas such as transportation, forestry or tourism (Clement 2005: 299). By the 2000–2006 programming period, however, their focus on sustainable development in the EU regional policy became relatively similar to each other so that a majority of programmes included environmental indicators.

We can hence find that the individual Nordic countries 'specialise' in particular aspects of sustainable development and then cooperate in their implementation. Denmark is concentrating mainly on the implementation of Agenda 2000 and the higher integration in the field of environmental protection as part of regional development support. It supports several local activities such as the so-called green municipalities' project and in 1994 established the Green Foundation to support environmental local activities across the country. While the government has been encouraging greener production, the consumers have been educated to demand environment-friendly products (Christensen 2007: 94, 95), which encouraged producers not only to apply all the regulations but also to invest into research and development. The voluntary activities were supplementing the increasing body of environmental legislation and the country included environmental policy into its key national interests to be promoted abroad. Denmark also opened its first three 'energy cities'[29] — Kolding,

Copenhagen and Skive and there is a rising trend of the so-called 'klimakommuner,' climate districts, which commit to lower the CO_2 emissions.

Similarly, Sweden is trying to combine environmental protection with the implementation of the goals of the EU structural policy, mainly in the areas of increasing economic competitiveness with reducing the negative impact on the environment. The Swedish government includes in its goals for climate policy not only domestic changes but also their implementation in other countries while developing new technologies promoting sustainable development — with the naturally plausible effect of selling them in third world countries. It acknowledges that it comprises many export possibilities, potential for expanding the job market and increasing economic growth in the country. In September 2008, the Swedish government issued a statement where it stated that 'We propose to develop Sweden's leading role in climate and energy policies and to make a big step towards Swedish ability to meet the goals of the EU energy and climate package.'[27] In October 2008 the Swedish government announced that it would raise the financial resources available for the research on climate change to half million Swedish crowns till 2012[28] and in the very same month.

Finland focuses on the improvement of environmental protection in urban areas, where it is trying to combine environmental and socio-economic factors. Apart from practical measures, Finland also promotes research for new methodologies that are aimed at involving the public and non-governmental institutions.[30] These new findings should then be implemented first on the level of Nordic cooperation and the European Union and then in the UN. The Nordic countries are aware that these policies not only help to solve the problems of climate change but also have positive economic implications.

The most recent application of the harmonised approach to sustainable development on both the regional and European levels was the preparation of the new Arctic strategy. In September 2008, the Nordic countries called for an EU coordinated approach to the environment in the Arctic region that would result into a comprehensive EU policy for the region. They prepared a report *The European Union and the Arctic* published in August 2008 followed by a high-profile conference *Common Concern for the Arctic* in September with researchers evaluating the effects of climate change on the flora, fauna and living conditions in the Arctic and with the representatives of the Nordic countries, EU Commission, EU Parliament and the French presidency. The issues included in the report were climate change, globalisation, access to natural resources and skills enhancement targeting policies such as research, the environment, fisheries, energy and trade and also included a proposal for a reciprocal partnership with Greenland.[31] The policy was identified as one of the key goals of the Swedish EU presidency in 2009 and coincided with the EU review of its Arctic policy. It combined the strong scientific background with high political profile, which seemed crucial for finding reasonable and attainable proposals for the

policy change and for ensuring their inclusion in the agenda and their implementation.

The conference ended with a declaration of strong EU support. The EU was due to publish its own guidelines in November, which was according to Janos Herman from the EU Commission strongly influenced by the conclusions of the conference. On November 20th, the Commission published its proposal titled *European Union Strategy for the Arctic*, which was to promote sustainable management of the Arctic region.[32] The undeniable effect of the Nordic countries on the EU Arctic policy is traceable already from the fact that it exists because in the EU only Sweden and Finland have territories in the Arctic region. The Commission's proposal then directly states that 'The Nordic Council of Ministers does valuable work promoting Arctic cooperation' and the proposals for action directly addressed the need to cooperate with and coordinate the activities with the Nordic countries.[33]

The Nordic countries also plan to discuss the issue during the 2009 UN Climate Summit highlighting the typical Nordic model of combining local, national, regional, EU and global approaches to solving the environmental problems and of ensuring their publicity and attention while guaranteeing that local initiatives and solutions are taken into account, which involves both the local and national economies. The strong support of the public, Denmark hosting the summit and Sweden holding the EU presidency at that time offer a promise of a proactive approach during the negotiations and some tangible product as a result.

The Nordic Countries have always been considered key proponents of a greater international coordination in the protection of the environment and the introduction of international norms, which would coordinate and guarantee environmental protection. After the fourth enlargement, a group of EU MS emerged that promoted stricter environmental protection. This group includes Germany, Benelux, Denmark, Austria, Sweden and Finland (Winkler 1998: 399). It, thus, expanded the group of countries that had been labelled as the EC green countries — Denmark, Netherlands, Germany and the UK. Denmark was also taken for the most radical advocate of the EU environmental policy and the country that is seen as the driving force behind the introduction of the environmental chapter into the SEA, which modified the status of the policy from *de facto* to also *de iure*.[34]

After the entry of Sweden and Finland into the EU, Denmark gained stronger support and the Nordic countries did not need to rely only on the coordination of their steps in the Nordic Council. This cooperation continues as the Nordic ministers of environment meet after each meeting of the EU Council, as the Danish and Finnish ministers for environment, Connie Hedegaard and Jan-Erik Enestam confirm: 'The environment is a good example of an area in which Nordic co-operation can contribute to raising the standards of the EU. We are still facing many challenges to keep the Baltic Sea clean. Environmental problems cross borders therefore we must

seek international solutions.' [35] The success of the Nordic countries when promoting national interests in the EU lies with the clear definition of national interests that the wide political spectrum can agree on, governments' prioritisation of the area and the consistent approach to their promotion in the EU utilising the additional tools provided by the Nordic model of cooperation.

The accession of the Nordic countries to the EU added a new dimension to their traditional cooperation, the European arena, where they could apply the experiences acquired in the United Nations and in other multilateral forums.[36] The nature of their cooperation has, however, been defined more by pragmatism and intergovernmentalism than supranationalism, which has been also a feature of them being small states that resist the melting of their national sovereignty, or as some say autonomy. Thus, they feature high levels of coordination and cooperation but also individual approaches where common ground has not been developed yet. These individual advances are, though, shared and might be adopted by the other countries if found useful and worth ensuing.

As the EU starts to gain a higher recognition in the UN,[37] the Nordic countries try to merge their efforts and perceive the EU as an important player in formalizing their interests in their policies, where environmental policy and particularly sustainable development play a very important role. Consequently, the 'Nordic effort is now directed towards influencing European policy. The focus of continued Nordic cooperation is not to present a cohesive, autonomous Nordic position to the rest of the world, but to work together informally to find ways of influencing European policy' (Latikainen 2003: 435) and if needed also European policy in the UN. The Nordic countries are convinced that the EU has as a result become more 'Nordic' rather than them becoming more 'European' (Latikainen 2003: 436).

Notes

1 Nordic cooperation including all Nordic countries will be referred to in this paper as regional cooperation and collaboration of the three Nordic countries, which are members of the EU (Denmark, Finland, Sweden) as sub-regional because it takes place mostly inside of the EU.

2 One tenth of their state offices has contact once a day or once a week and one third once a month or more often. The state administration that is directly involved in the EU affairs has the frequency of contacts approximately twice as high. Jacobsson, Bengt and Per Lægreid et. al. (2001) *Europaveje. EU i de nordiske centralforvaltninger.* København, s. 165.

3 Small states are defined in the EU by their relatively small population given that the power of the state in the Council of the European Union is determined by the population size (i.e. Sweden and Finland qualify as small states). Alternatively, the literature on small states in international relations also examines the area and gross domestic product. A state can be small in population but large in area and wealth such as Norway (has total area

slightly larger than Germany and second highest GDP per capita among OECD countries, 65 % higher than the average) or small in area and population but economically strong, for example Luxembourg (wealthiest of all OECD countries).

4 It also includes three dependent territories, Greenland that left the EU in 1985, Faroe Islands (excluded from the EU) and Åland Islands (have a special status within the EU, excluded from the EU fiscal policy).

5 Browning, Christopher (2007) 'Branding Nordicity. Models, Identity and the Decline of Exceptionalism', *Cooperation and Conflict* 42, 1: 27, 35. Heidi Haggrén notes that their collaboration in UNESCO, where they wanted to create the image of Norden and to export the Nordic values, provides a good example of this approach. Cited in Browning 2007: 35.

6 Silárszky, Peter and René Levínský (1999) 'Coalition Formation and Eastward Expansion of the EU. Implications for the Council', *Prague Economic Papers*, Vysoká škola ekonomická Praha, Available at: http://www.vse.cz/pep/cislo.php3?cislo=1&rocnik=1999 (Accessed on 15 July 2003); Widgrén, Mika (1993) 'A Nordic Coalition's Influence on the EC Council of Ministers' in Jan Fagerberg and Lars Lundberg (eds) *European Economic Integration: A Nordic Perspective,* pp. 332–352. Avebury: Aldershot, pp. 343.

7 In the case of environmental policy, we often see Nordic countries voting against a proposal if they perceive it as not ambitious enough, for example in the case of Regulation on Nutrition and Health. They also often support each others' national statements, which was the case of Denmark supporting Sweden on the position that health and environmental concerns affect agriculture.

8 Action programmes are frameworks providing general rules for policy making. They are usually adopted for five years. They have recommendation status and are not legally binding. However, they carry substantial political weight because they represent the Commission's priorities for the given period.

9 First Action Programme focused on the negative effect of pollution on environment. Some central elements of the first Action programme such as the principle *polluter pays* are still key definers of the policy today. Second Action Programme was initiated in 1976 and the third in 1983. The third Action programme was particularly important as it highlighted the necessity to relate environmental policy to other Community policies, mainly agriculture, energy, industry and transport.

Lindholm, Arto (n.d.) 'Finland in EU Environmental Policy. The Finnish Ministry of Environment'.

Availableat: www.environment.fi/download. asp?contentid=14545&lan=en (Accessed on 10 July 2004), p. 11

10 In March 2007 the heads of EU MS adopted a long-term strategy (targets to be met by 2020) for energy policy including binding targets for greenhouse gas emissions, developing renewable energy sources, promoting energy efficiency and promoting biofuels.

Council of the European Union (2007) 'Brussels European Council Presidency Conclusions'. Available at: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st07/st07224-re01.en07.pdf (Accessed on 10 January 2009).

11 Drake, Francis, et al. (2003) 'European Businesses, National Priorities: Pioneers and Laggards of Ecological Modernization' *European Environment*, 13: 166. See also for the case studies on Germany, UK and France.

12 Minna Autio and Visa Heinonen mention that there is an ongoing debate in Finland why people do not want to pay for green electricity. The authors found when interviewing young people in Finland that while they are aware of environmental issues, they do not really engage in personal activities to protect the environment other than recycling and managing waste and to some extent shopping in second hand shops/flee markets. Autio, Minna and Visa Heinonen (2004) 'To Consume or Not to Consume? Young People's Environmentalism in

the Affluent Finnish Society' *Young*, 12. Several other polls show that Finland even though belonging to the prosperous countries with high standard of living, displays lower interest in the environment than other wealthy countries. Still, Finns are concerned about environmental issues and support strong role of the state in protecting the environment – as we saw in the Eurobarometer survey. Rauno Sairinen points to the relatively wide support for preventive measures, where the state has many powers but relatively low support for personal sacrifice, especially of financial nature. He believes that the reasons lie in the relatively good state of Finnish environment, high standard of Finnish environmental policy and belief that environmental problems are not as much of local or national but of global nature. Here, the Finns see many problems in the environment of Eastern European countries. He then explains their attitudes differ from the neighbouring Nordic countries because they are rooted in the specifics of Finnish identity related to living in a relatively large country with very low population density of 16 inhabitants per km^2 (Netherlands is app. 393 inhabitants per km^2, Sweden 20 per km^2), their general belief that they have close relationship with nature also caused by late urbanisation and lack of urban culture, and the fashion of summer cottages in the rural areas that developed in the 1960s and is still very popular. He then concludes by arguing that the Finns consider environmental issues legitimate and if the government would make them pay more for it, a vast majority would accept it. Sairinen, Rauno (2001) 'Public Support for Environmental Policy in Finland: Cultural Interpretations of Survey Results', *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 24, 2: 129–148. It is also interesting that the Finns show very high support for the statement that 'policies that aim at protecting the environment lead to motivation to innovate rather than create obstacles to economic development' (EU-27 63 %, FI 79 %, DK 71 %, SE 63 %), which might be related to the relatively high involvement of Finnish companies in developing new, green, technologies. Thus, we could say that based on these conclusions, the Finns are not going to develop more personal actions but if asked or forced to do it by the authorities, they would accept it.

13 In DK EU reduction and increase in EU renewables targets are seen as too modest by 27 %, resp. 34 %, in SE by 31 %, resp. 34 %, and in FI by 17 %, resp. 17 %, the majority of Finns then sees them as about right.

14 Regeringskansliet faktablad (2005) 'Sverige och miljön efter 10 år i EU', available at: http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/04/44/90/fdd9f0a7.pdf (Accessed on 14 September 2008).

15 Other priorities of the Danish presidency for the year 2005 included limits on the negative effects of noise and economic analyses of the impact of limiting pesticide usage in the Nordic region.
Norden i en ny tid. Viden, dynamik og samarbejde. Nordiska radet, http://www.norden2005.dk (Accessed 20 April 2004), pp. 15.

16 In March 2007 when the EU presidency was looking for support to establish binding targets for renewable energy as part of the EU climate policy until 2020, Sweden and Denmark stated together with Portugal that they would support it if it included further development of decisions made by the Energy Council.

17 Regeringskansliet (2008) 'Rådets möte (miljöministrarna) den 30 oktober 2007 i Luxemburg'. Available at: http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/6745/a/91188 (Accessed on 14 September 2008).

18 Regeringskansliet (2008) 'Rådets möte (miljöministrarna) den 20 februari 2007 i Bryssel'. Available at: http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/10155/a/77013 (Accessed on 14 September 2008).

19 'Nordic Countries Unite to Find Climate Solutions', *Nordic News Weekly*. Available at: www.norden.org/webb/news/news.asp?lang=6&id=7855 (Accessed on 26 July 2008).

[20] Sovereignty International, I.n.c. (n.d.) 'Introduction to Sustainable Development'. Available at: http://sovereignty.net/p/sd/sdtut.htm (Accessed on 10 January 2009).

[21] Clement, Keith (2005) 'Environment and Sustainable Development in the EU Structural Funds: a Review of Nordic Performance' *European Environment*, 15: s. 297. Dryzek uses the examples of hurricane Katrina in the USA, which showed that the most vulnerable people suffering from the effects of climate change are the poor, which can be offset by a redistributive social policy. (Dryzek, cited in Gough 2008: 335).

[22] This is not limited to the Nordic countries only but they could be perceived as the pioneers in this respect, together with the Netherlands, another 'green' country. There is another dimension of relationship between environmental and social welfare – some environmental policies such as 'green' taxes can have negative effect on the situation of some social groups, mainly the poor. Thus, a policy is needed to offset the unequal distribution of these negative effects. For some see Markandya and Oritz, cited in Gough 2008: 341. There has been an increasing amount of research done on this issue, many focusing on measuring the effects of policies introduced in the Nordic countries, but the results are not fully conclusive and we will need more studies conducted to be able to fully assess the possible impacts. Nevertheless, they show that there is a direct relationship between the two policies and we need to keep them in mind.

[23] The 1999 regulations included the following provisions: the rates of contribution may be differentiated on the basis of the regional importance attached to the protection and improvement of the environment; Structural Funds partnerships at all levels (national, regional and local) must include organisations concerned with environmental protection and sustainable development; the European Regional Development Fund must be seen to support the clean and efficient utilisation of energy and the development of renewable energy sources; environmental considerations are to form a greater part of evaluation, especially in relation to the effectiveness of integration. Clement, Keith and Malin Hansen (2001) *Sustainable Regional Development in the Nordic Countries*. Stockholm: Nordregio.

[24] When asked how the progress of their countries should be evaluated, 87 % of Danes, 86 % of the Swedes and 84 % of the Finns answered that it should be done based on equality of social, environmental and economic indicators rather than on money based economic indicators only (EU-27 67 %). Special Eurobarometr 295 (2008) 'Attitudes of European Citizens towards the Environment'. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_295_en.pdf (Accessed on 7 January 2009), pp. 38.

[25] The study was conducted by Sustainable Society Foundation in 151 countries. The index is measured biannually. It covers 22 indicators such as quality of air and water, gender equality, education, etc. The full report can be found on http://www.sustainablesocietyindex.com/full_publication_ssi-2008.pdf

[26] In order to support the aims, Denmark, Norway and Sweden also introduced an Inter-Nordic internet course for regional and local officials and practitioners. For the evaluation of the course, see *Strandberg, Larsgoran and Nils Brandt (2001)* 'Sustainable Development in Theory and Practice: An Inter-Nordic Internet Course for Regional and Local Officials and Practitioners', *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* 2**,** 3: 220–225.

[27] Regeringskansliet Pressmeddelande (2009) 'Klimat- och energisatsningar i budgetpropositionen 2009'. Available at: http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/10902/a/110590 (Accessed on 20 November 2008).

[28] Miljödepartementet Pressmeddelande *(*2008*)* 'Klimatforskningen stärks med 500 miljoner kronor'. Available at: http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/11069/a/113994 (Accessed on 20 November 2008).

[29] Cities with very small energy use – in Copenhagen the city decided to support biking, public transportation and redistribution of district heating. Energi Styrelsen, (n.d.)'Pressemeddelelse fra Klima- og Energiministeriet: Danmark får sine første tre energibyer'. Available at: http://www.ens.dk/sw76104.asp (Accessed on 20 November 2008).

[30] In projects such as Propolis or PSSD a system of sustainability assessment was developed for activities related to the metropolitan area Helsinki. The methodology was called Planner's Toolbox and was also included in the Agenda 21. A similar example was the project called Learning Sustainability, which was conducted in the north of Finland, in Lapland. This project managed to increase the general awareness about sustainable development, regions were exchanging information and the results were widely published in the media.
Clement, Keith and Malin Hansen (2001) *Sustainable Regional Development in the Nordic Countries*. Stockholm: Nordregio. pp. 104.

[31] 'Call for Co-ordinated EU Policy on the Arctic', *Nordic News Weekly*, (n. d..). Available at: http://www.norden.org/webb/news/news.asp?lang=6&id=8035 (Accessed on 1 September 2008).

[32] It has three main objectives – protecting and preserving the Arctic together with its population; promoting the sustainable use of resources; and enhancing multilateral governance in the region.

[33] Commission of the European Communities (n.d.) 'The European Union and the Arctic Region'. Available at: http://www.europa-kommissionen.dk/upload/application/8a4b7e1e/uuu.pdf (Accessed on 27 December 2008).

[34] It was mainly an agreement between the North and the South in the EU, where the northern countries agreed to increase the funds for regional and social policies. In exchange, the southern countries agreed to tighten up the environmental standards and to finalise the single market.
Lindholm, Arto (n.d.) 'Finland in EU Environmental Policy. The Finnish Ministry of Environment'.
Available at: www.environment.fi/download. asp?contentid=14545&lan=en (Accessed on 10 July 2004), s. 12—13.

[35] Top of Europe (2005) *'We Can Learn from Each Other'*. Available at: http://www.norden.org/topofeurope/ShowIssue.asp?lang=en-gb&issue=30#story390 (Accessed on 15 February 2006).

[36] Katie Verlin Laatikainen notes that it is striking to what extent they have developed an 'explicit, distinctive Nordic profile' in the UN, being perceived as a group of states that pursues 'international justice and human rights and social development rather than narrow national interests.'
Laatikainen, Katie Verlin (2003) 'Norden's Eclipse: The Impact of the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy on the Nordic Group in the United Nations', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 38: 417.

[37] For discussion, see Laatikainen, Katie Verlin (2003) 'Norden's Eclipse: The Impact of the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy on the Nordic Group in the United Nations', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 38: 426—427.

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