



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Report on the 76<sup>th</sup> Nordic Council Session 28 – 31 October 2024, Reykjavik, Iceland



*Claire Baker MSP, Kenneth Gibson MSP and Ariane Burgess MSP*

### **Introduction**

1. The [76th Nordic Council Session](#) took place in Reykjavik, Iceland on 29 October – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024. The theme of the Session was “Peace and Security in the Arctic”.
2. The annual session brought together over 600 parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and institutions from across the Nordic region to address issues facing parliaments today. The Session offered the opportunity for Members to benefit from learning, networking, professional development and the sharing of best practice with colleagues from the Nordic parliaments and international guests.
3. Claire Baker MSP, Convener of the Economy and Fair Work Committee, Ariane Burgess MSP, Convener of the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee and Kenneth Gibson MSP, Convener of the Finance

and Public Administration Committee represented the Scottish Parliament at the Session.

### Recommendations

- Mette Gervin Damsgaard, Secretary to the Nordic Council's Knowledge and Growth Committee, will share a report on pathway to carbon neutrality.
- It is recommended that the Scottish Parliament explore the possibility of offering internships to young Belarussians.
- Once the Nordic Council Committees have agreed their work programmes for 2025 the Scottish Parliament's International Relations Office will share these with the Parliament's committees to see if there are any opportunities for knowledge exchanges.
- Claire Baker MSP will highlight the discussions from the meeting with the Committee for a Sustainable Nordic Region to the Conveners' Group and SPICe.
- Claire Baker MSP will highlight discussions from the Meeting with the Committee for Welfare in the Nordic Region with the Economy and Fair Work Committee and SPICe.

### Purpose

4. The primary purpose of the visit to Reykjavik was to attend the 76th Nordic Council Session and showcase the Scottish Parliament's wish to increase our collaboration with the Nordic Council and the parliaments in the region.
5. The second aim of the visit was to meet with delegates from parliaments and international organisations attending the conference to develop bilateral relations and identify topics for potential knowledge exchanges.
6. The third aim of the visit was to provide Members with development opportunities by speaking to their counterparts in other parliaments and share best practice examples.

### Background

7. The Nordic Council is the official body for formal inter-parliamentary co-operation. Formed in 1952, it has 87 members from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. The main aim of the Nordic Council is to make the Nordic Region one in which people want to live and work. Members take part in the different committees to bring forward ideas and recommendations which are then debated in the annual plenary known as the Nordic Council Session.

8. There are six [committees](#):

- The Presidium
- Committee for Knowledge and Culture in the Nordic Region
- Committee for a Sustainable Nordic Region
- Committee for Growth and Development in the Nordic Region
- Committee for Welfare in the Nordic Region
- The Control Committee
- The Election Committee

9. A copy of the programme is attached at Annex A.

### **Programme**

**Tuesday 29 October 2024**

#### Address by President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy

10. Members were invited to a special session where the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressed the Members and guests of the Nordic Council.

#### Political briefing by the UK Ambassador to Iceland

11. The Members were invited to lunch by the UK Ambassador to Iceland and were given a political briefing. The current government has been dissolved and elections are due to take place on 30 November.
12. There was discussion around the UK's involvement in the Arctic Circle and Nordic Council. The delegation was also joined by Rt Hon Caroline Nokes, Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons.
13. *"The meeting with the British Ambassador along with Caroline Nokes MP was an informative start to the conference. The Ambassador and her official provided a good oversight of the current political environment in Iceland and gave an indication of the key issues for the Nordic Council including the importance of security matters. In terms of Parliament work, it encouraged me to think about security concerns beyond the EU."*- Claire Baker MSP
14. *"We had a fascinating discussion about some of the Ambassador's work, including her cooperation with Iceland on Arctic ship traffic data as the Northwest Passage opens with the Arctic Sea ice melting. Marine traffic is on the increase due to shorter routes between Europe and Asia. With Scotland facing increasing demands for use of its territorial sea I found it useful to understand the potential impacts increasing marine traffic could have on our marine environment. This is a wider context that I can bring into the work of the Rural Affairs and Island's marine inquiries."* – Ariane Burgess MSP
15. *"Ambassador Dr Bryony Mathew was kind enough to meet the Scottish delegation with House of Commons Deputy Speaker Caroline Nokes MP at the British Embassy. Over lunch, Dr Mathew discussed the strategic importance of Iceland to the UK, the impact of climate change and the forthcoming Icelandic election where a government different to the Independence Party, Progressive Party and Left-Green Movement was anticipated."*- Kenneth Gibson MSP



*Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP, Ambassador Dr Bryony Mathew, Kenneth Gibson MSP, Ariane Burgess MSP and Claire Baker MSP*

#### Opening of the 76<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session of the Nordic Council and Plenary

16. The opening of the Plenary Session included a welcome from Birgir Ármannsson, Speaker of the Althingi, Einar Þorsteinsson, Mayor of Reykjavik and Bryndís Haraldsdóttir, President of the Nordic Council 2024. This was followed by formalities including the approval of the list of delegates, standing orders for the 76<sup>th</sup> Session and agenda.
17. Following this was the Nordic Summit with the Prime Ministers and heads of government. During this agenda item Prime Ministers from all eight member states gave a short speech outlining their intentions on how to guarantee peace and security in the Arctic and Nordic and were then asked questions from the members of the Nordic Council. Any member was able to direct a question to any of the eight prime ministers.
18. Finally, the plenary concluded with the programme for Finland and Åland's Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers 2025.
19. Video recordings of the plenary sessions can be found on the [Nordic Council's website](#).



Claire Baker MSP, Kenneth Gibson MSP and Ariane Burgess MSP

### Meeting with the Committee for a Sustainable Nordic Region

20. In the afternoon, Claire Baker MSP and Ariane Burgess MSP met with Tove Elise Madland, Chair of the Committee for a Sustainable Nordic Region and Krista Mikkonen member of the Committee for a Sustainable Nordic Region. They discussed the mechanisms around the just transition and how to get from where we are now to the target, through drawing down capital investment.
21. There was discussion around the value of biodiversity and how we can protect it.
22. They also discussed how the Nordic Council has been successful in engaging the Nordic Youth and new ways to engage with the Nordic Council of Ministers.
23. Finally, they spoke about how the committee is looking at the Nordic approach to the added value of what already exists. The Committee will conduct a scientific assessment to identify where they can add value and do it together as a Nordic Region. The clerk of the Committee will share a report on the pathway to carbon neutrality.
24. *“It was interesting to meet two members from the committee and have an initial discussion about issues of shared interest, including biodiversity and energy. I was struck by what wasn’t being discussed as much as what was and ‘just transition’ didn’t appear to be an issue they were focusing on, or recognised as a concept in the same way we do. It was good to hear about the way in which the Nordic Council provides a forum for discussion on issues that require a shared response, such as the need to restore the Baltic Sea, and there was an interesting discussion on balancing fishing with other needs. In thinking about our plans for a just transition in Scotland it would be interesting to continue to engage with the Nordic countries and consider how their approach progresses. This might be an area the Convenors Group would be interested in as it is one of their priority areas, as well as SPICe and I will highlight this committee’s work with them.”- Claire Baker MSP*

25. *“This was an illuminating discussion about the work the committee is undertaking to support the Nordic Council member states to meet the global agreement to protect 30% of the planet for nature by 2030. This was the topic our meeting counterparts were keen to highlight. The committee has made recommendations that include prioritising nature-based solutions, securing land and natural resources, incentivising conservation, mainstreaming biodiversity, reducing food and plastic waste and promoting healthy oceans. To mobilise action in these areas they have asked the member governments to invest seed money.*
26. *I was interested to hear about their understanding that planting trees to reduce carbon emissions will not be sufficient and that industry must have a route map to reduce emissions rather than offset them.*
27. *Our National Planning Framework supports reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and protection of biodiversity through the planning system, so it was interesting to hear about their approach and also have a shared sense of the challenges we face. I can see an opportunity through the upcoming Natural Environment bill to draw on this committee’s work.” – Ariane Burgess MSP*

#### Meeting with the Committee for Growth and Development

28. The delegation met with Per-Arne Håkansson MP, member of the Growth and Development Committee. There was discussion around the values of the Nordic Council and how this allowed trust to be built between the nations.
29. They spoke about local government and the delivery of services, looking at long term decisions to ensure sustainability, recruitment of people, the issue of depopulation and how welfare systems can support people returning to work.
30. They also spoke about how local taxes fund the municipalities and regions.
31. *“We had a brief meeting with one member from Sweden which was mainly about the fiscal regime in Sweden. We had a short discussion on national and local taxes which gave a interesting context to the forthcoming Scottish budget.” – Claire Baker MSP*
32. *“We met with veteran Swedish Social Democrat MP Per-Arne Håkansson MP, member of the Growth and Development Committee. We had chatted about the ongoing work between Nordic nations to build on their common values of democracy and human rights and spoke about how services are delivered, local authority size, scale and levels of autonomy and the demographic challenges faced by Nordic countries in relation to economic growth, welfare provision and rural depopulation.”- Kenneth Gibson MSP*



*Ariane Burgess MSP, Claire Baker MSP, Per-Arne Håkansson MP and Kenneth Gibson MSP*

### Nordic Council Prize Ceremony and the Icelandic Government's Reception

33. In the evening the delegation attended the Nordic Council Prize Ceremony and the Icelandic Government's reception at the Parliament Hotel. During the event the following prizes were awarded:

- Nordic Council Environment Prize
- Nordic Council Children and Young People's Literature Prize
- Nordic Council Literature Prize
- Nordic Council Film Prize
- Nordic Council Music Prize



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### **Wednesday 30 October 2024**

34. On the second day the plenary sessions focused on reports from Ministers for Foreign Affairs; Defence; and Nordic Co-operation. The Nordic Council of Minister's budget was scrutinised as was the work of the Nordic Council of Minister's work on welfare in the Nordic Region.

#### Parliamentary Guest Speaker

35. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Head of the United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus addressed the Nordic Council. She thanked the Nordic region for their support and spoke of the deep strong cultural connections between Belarus and the Nordics.

36. She proposed to engage the democratic Belarus in the Nordic co-operation so they can learn and collaborate. She urged the council to do a number of things, firstly to provide young Belarusians internships within the Nordic political system. Secondly, for politicians to 'adopt' political prisoners. Thirdly, for the Nordics to provide more scholarships and visas to students, journalists and business, help support and strengthen civil society. Fourthly, to bring the Belarus regime to justice, by supporting the Lithuanians who have referred the situation in Belarus to the International Criminal Court. Fifthly, to reject the rigged elections and call for free, fair and just elections, She went on to encourage the Nordic youth to look at the Belarus case to value the democracy they have and to embrace it.

37. It is recommended that the Scottish Parliament explore the possibility of offering internships to young Belarussians.

#### International co-operation

38. Speeches were given by International Guests, with Claire Baker MSP giving a speech on behalf of the Scottish Parliament. She highlighted the similarities we share with the Nordic Region and our wish to collaborate more with the parliaments within the region. Other international guests included delegates from the Baltic Assembly, Benelux Parliament, Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, National Assembly of Québec, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Schleswig-Holstein Landtag, UK Parliament and Vestnordisk Råd.

39. *"A number of non-Nordic guests spoke:*

- *Irish Speaker Sean O'Feaghail TD*
- *House of Commons Deputy Speaker Caroline Nokes MP*
- *EU Vice President Christel Schaldemose MEP*
- *Claire Baker MSP*
- *And Baltic, Quebecois & Dutch representatives also contributed.*

40. *The previous day, Ukraine's President Zelenskyy addressed the Nordic Council, focusing on the need for continued political and financial support and the need for Russia to return kidnapped Ukrainian children.*



41. *The legitimate, elected President of Belarus, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, also addressed us, seeking support for political prisoners, including her husband, from whom she has not heard in two years.*
42. *That they did is testament to the importance of the Arctic and the democratic European Nordic nations to Ukraine’s economic and military survival and how both countries look to the Nordic nations as democratic exemplars.”- Kenneth Gibson MSP*



*Claire Baker MSP. Copyright Nordisk Råd og Nordisk Ministerråd*

Meeting with the Committee for Welfare in the Nordic Region

43. Claire Baker MSP and Ariane Burgess MSP met with Eva Lindh, Chair of the Committee for Welfare in the Nordic Region. The discussion focused on fair work particularly around people with disabilities; the housing emergency and the national planning framework.
44. *“The focus of the meeting which was of interest to me was the discussion on how to get those furthest from the workplace into employment, and this helped inform my committee’s work on closing the disability employment gap. While the Nordic Countries have narrower gaps, they still struggle with progress and are considering ways to increase involvement in the workplace. They too are facing labour market shortages. We are having similar discussions in Scotland and it would be good to continue these discussions. I will highlight to committee clerks and SPICe.” – Claire Baker MSP*
45. *“We had an interesting discussion about the housing emergency, depopulation and policy for the elderly. It was interesting to hear about the problems arising with the shift away from the long-held socially subsidised housing managed through local authorities and housing cooperatives*

*towards a model of financialisation and market driven solutions. The financialisation of housing in Scotland is also bringing similar problems with young and marginalised people being unable to afford a home. The Local Government, Housing and Planning committee has been doing work on how to better support community-run housing associations. We can learn from what is happening in the Nordics and raise the matter of these community organisations needing capacity building to thrive.” - Ariane Burgess MSP*



*Ariane Burgess MSP, Eva Lindh MP and Claire Baker MSP*

#### The Nordic Council Presidium and the Chairs of the Committees' Seminar and Reception for the International Guests

46. All international guests of the Nordic Council Session were invited to attend a seminar on *“The way forward to a Democratic Belarus – the role of Nordic and International Parliamentarians”*. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Head of the United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus addressed the guests. Foreign Minister Thórdís Kolbrún Reykþjörd Gylfadóttir was also on the panel.
47. Sviatlana urged the guests to be a voice for Belarus in order to uphold human rights. She talked about how she found herself in the position of heading up the United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus, and the importance of non-violent change and how a peaceful change will result in a more stable transition.
48. She talked about how the focus needed to be on the way forward and the way out of dictatorship. She spoke about how the fate of both Ukraine and Belarus are intertwined and how Europe needed to offer Belarus an alternative to Russia. That Europe needed to be ready for when the window of opportunity arose.

49. *“It was important to hear from the Belarusian political activist Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, and about the political situation in Belarus which is often forgotten. The seminar was also a good opportunity to speak to politicians from the Nordic countries and build relationships which I hope to continue.”*  
– Claire Baker MSP
50. *“In this evening seminar, moderated by Ms. Bryndís Haraldsdóttir, President of the Nordic Council, we were addressed by Ms. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Head of the United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus. Sviatlana spoke powerfully about the experience of people living in Belarus. She covered 5 specific steps the Nordic Council could take to help Belarus. Three of which stood out for me.*
51. *That despite war and repression, the people of Belarus want democracy and are working underground to spread honest news.*
52. *That we invite their representatives as observers to our sessions, engage them in our projects. Provide young Belarusians with internships at our offices.*
53. *She asked Nordic countries to provide more scholarships, visas, exchanges, and training.*
54. *I would like to encourage the Scottish Parliament where possible/appropriate to engage with Ms. Tsikhanouskaya’s suggestions.”* - Ariane Burgess MSP



*Kenneth Gibson MSP, Claire Baker MSP and Ariane Burgess MSP*

## Thursday 31 October

### Plenary

55. Today's plenary focused on the work of the Nordic Council's committees. The various committees presented their recommendations, which were followed by a vote.
56. *"A range of issues were discussed in the plenary sessions. The main theme was on maintaining peace and security in the region and the importance of defending the Nordic welfare model of equality and looking after people. Other topics discussed included maintaining a nuclear free region, the need to stand up against fake news and organised crime and the challenges and opportunities for the region with the rapid loss of Arctic Sea ice. This range of issues, along with others they discussed has deepened my awareness of Scotland's relational context with Nordic countries. I will draw on this in my work in both the Local Government, Housing and Planning, and Rural Affairs and Islands Committees."* - Ariane Burgess MSP

### Presidency 2025

57. The final item on the agenda was the election of the next President and Vice-President of the Nordic Council followed by the Swedish programme for the Presidency of the Nordic Council 2025. Heléne Björklund was elected as President and Maria Stockhaus was elected as Vice-President of the Nordic Council 2025. The Swedish Presidency will focus on "[The Nordics together – the Nordic advantage and unity in troubled times](#)".
58. Once the Nordic Council Committees have agreed their work programmes for 2025, IRO will share these with the Scottish Parliament's committees to see if there are any opportunities for knowledge exchange.

## Feedback

### Claire Baker MSP

59. *"Visiting the Nordic Council was a fantastic opportunity to better understand the role of the Nordic Council and the issues that are concerning Nordic countries and their governments. I welcomed the opportunity to address the Council and emphasise how much we value our relationship with the Nordic Council and are looking to work together on shared concerns. I enjoyed attending the plenary sessions to hear from the countries' leaders, where there was a strong focus on security, and also listen to the open debate where the political differences and tensions between some countries and political parties became clearer. It was also good to work with MSPs from other parties and build cross party relationships, which will benefit my work in Parliament."*

### Ariane Burgess MSP

60. *"Joining the delegation to the Nordic Council was an enriching, confidence building and illuminating experience."*

61. *The Plenary Sessions were engaging, and I found myself imagining a future in which Scotland is a member of the Council and how we could contribute to the discussion and debate rather than watch from the sidelines.*
62. *The format was powerful, with parliamentarians having the opportunity to question heads of state and ministers on the issues they've been deliberating.*
63. *I was delighted that delegates, on learning that I was attending the Council, reached out for a meeting. This then led to a number of highly useful meetings with a number of parliamentarians over lunch and other breaks during the plenary.*
64. *Overall, I was impressed by the work of members of these 8 parliaments who are collectively dedicated to maintaining a progressive welfare-based approach in the Nordic region, something I hear from my work many constituents want to see pursued in Scotland.*
65. *It took being there to fully understand the purpose of the Council and naturally bring it alive and I would advocate that perhaps having members attend 2 consecutive Sessions, the first to understand what it's all about and the second to maximise engagement and gathering useful information. Forging stronger relationships with the Nordic countries is important for Scotland's future and this is a constructive forum in which to do this."*

#### Kenneth Gibson MSP

66. *"The Scottish delegation was made very welcome at the Nordic Council.*
67. *Security and climate change concerns and the demand for equal membership of the Council from the Åland Islands, Faroe Islands and Greenland were to the fore.*
68. *However, what struck me most was the fact that Party groups across the Nordics then others can ask any question to any Minister, including the Prime Minister. Thus, the Prime Minister of Finland might be asked a question by a delegate from Greenland. And was!*
69. *Many eclectic issues were debated. For example:*
- *Inequality - is increasing in Norway, not Sweden.*
  - *Freedom of movement - Finland & Iceland lack the technology to manage this effectively.*
  - *Obstacles to enhanced infrastructure development – is it the lack of a Nordic Minister for Transport? Or does international co-operation work well.*
  - *Sami language rights – need to be enhanced.*
  - *Gender equality – why is there no trans equality in the labour market?*
  - *The future Nordic Economy - Green, sustainable and competitive.*
  - *Migrants - must adapt to Nordic culture.*

- *Health & Social Care - solutions, policies and social sustainability could improve if border obstacles removed.*
  - *Climate Change - Gender impact. One third of green jobs are held by women. Mainstream this and invest in public transport which helps women as they 'favour collective solutions.'*
  - *Racism and Extremism - spreading in the Nordics. Needs to be an enhanced focus on racism from and between minority groups.*
  - *International Moratorium on Sea Mining - Carried and should remain in place until environmental, social and economy impact is assessed. However, the Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish governments reject that decision.*
  - *Nordic Council Foreign Policy - Nordic solutions in demand. Co-operation as a role model. Respect for human rights helps build security and democratic forces with norms and standards being crucial. Two thirds of world's people living in autocracies.*
  - *Environmental Taxes – Vital to reduce degradation. Agreed 33-27.*
  - *Small scale agriculture - Needs more support. Agreed 49-13*
  - *Solar Cells should be installed in Large Car Parks – Agreed 40-21*
  - *Scaling Up Wildlife Protection – Essential for migrating birds and herds.*
  - *Global Agreement on Biodiversity - crucial to ensure ecosystem survival. Over one million species face extinction.*
  - *Multiculturalism Policy & Education - has failed. Iceland should not make the same mistake as Sweden. PISA results declining.*
  - *Regulation of Tech Giants – is vital and unanimously agreed.*
70. *Of course, other than listening to debates we met many people. They were all either enthusiastic or relaxed about our attendance.*
71. *I believe it's important that the Scottish Parliament is ever-present at such events.*
72. *It was also good to get to know colleagues such as Ariane, Claire and Jennie better."*

## **Conclusion**

73. Claire Baker MSP, Convener of the Economy and Fair Work Committee, Ariane Burgess MSP, Convener of the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee and Kenneth Gibson MSP, Convener of the Finance and Public Administration Committee represented the Scottish Parliament at the 76<sup>th</sup> Nordic Council Session in Reykjavik, Iceland.
74. The Members took part in plenary sessions and networking events over three days. In addition to this Members held three formal bilateral meetings and a number of other informal bilateral meetings with colleagues across the Nordics.

75. The visit allowed for discussion and shared learning across a range of parliaments and topics. There were various recommendations/action points to take forward and the feedback from the Members showed it was a highly valuable visit. Members particularly enjoyed sharing best practices and developing relationships with colleagues across the Nordic region and further afield, enhancing their work as Parliamentarians.

**International Relations Office  
January 2025**

**Monday 28 October 2024**

**17.00 - 19.00 Register for the Session**

**Tuesday 29 October 2024**

**09.40 – 11.00 Address by President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy**

**12.30 – 13:30 Meeting with Dr Bryony Mathew, British Ambassador to Iceland, and Sophie Stewart, Deputy Head of Mission and Consul**

**14.15 – 17.30 Plenary Session**

14:15 - 14:35 1. Opening of the 2024 Session of the Nordic Council

- 1.1 Opening of the Session (cultural element)
- 1.2 Opening speech by the President of the Nordic Council
- 1.3 Approval of delegates, Document 2/2024
- 1.4 Approval of the rules for the 76th Session 2024, Document 4/2024
- 1.5 Approval of the agenda, Document 6/2024
- 1.6 Approval of recommendations and internal resolutions 2024, Document 8/2024

15:35 - 16:35 3. Summit with the Nordic prime ministers  
Theme: What is the best way to guarantee peace and security in the Arctic and the Nordic Region?  
• What tangible steps should be taken right now to enhance Nordic co-operation on contingency planning for crises, defence and security?  
• What is the best way for the Nordic Region to contribute to peace and stability in the Arctic and in its adjacent areas?  
• The future of Nordic co-operation: How can the “Nordic constitution” – the Helsinki Treaty – be updated to best suit the Nordic co-operation of today and the future?

16:35 – 16:45 4. The programme for the Finnish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2025  
4.1 The Prime Minister of Finland presents the programme for the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2025, Document xx/2024

16:45 - 17:00 5. Nordic Council internal affairs  
5.1 The Control Committee report for 2024



5.2 The Nordic Council accounts for 2023,  
Document 10/2024

- 17:00 – 17:30**      **Bilateral meeting with Committee for a Sustainable Nordic Region**
- 17:30 – 18:00**      **Bilateral meeting with Committee for Growth and Development**
- 19.00 – 21.00**      **Nordic Council Award Ceremony and Icelandic Government’s Reception (Members only)**

**Wednesday 30 October 2024**

- 09.00 - 11.45**      **Plenary Session**
- 09:00 - 10:00      6. Report by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs  
6.1 Report by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, oral.
- 10:00 - 10:35      7. Parliamentary guest speakers  
7.1 Ms. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Head of the United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus
- 10:35 - 11:35      8. International guest speakers
- 11:45 – 12:00      Group photo
- 12:00 - 13:30      Lunch
- 13:15 – 13:45**      **Bilateral with Eva Lindh, Chair of the Committee for Welfare in the Nordic Region**
- 14:00 - 14:25      9. Report by the Ministers of Defence  
9.1 Report by the Ministers of Defence, oral
- 14:25 - 14:45      10. The Nordic Council of Ministers’ budget  
10.1 Consideration of the Nordic Council of Ministers’ proposal for its 2025 budget, B 348/PRE  
10.2 Vote
- 14:45 - 16:55      11. Reports and Question Time with the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation  
11.1 Report by the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation on freedom of movement, Document x/2024  
11.2 Report by the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation, oral, Document x/2024  
11.3 Question time with the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation

- 16:55 - 17:25 12. The Nordic Council of Ministers' work on welfare in the Nordic Region  
 12.1 Report on the Nordic Council of Ministers' work on gender equality 2024, Document 21/2024  
 12.2 Report on the Nordic Council of Ministers' work on health and social affairs, Document 22/2024
- 17:25 - 18:05 13. Welfare in the Nordic Region  
 13.1 Consideration of members' proposal on gender equality in climate policy (A 1958/UVN)  
 13.2 Consideration of members' proposal for Nordic co-operation against racism and other forms of extremism (A 1964/UVN)  
 13.3 Consideration of member's proposal on the mapping and prevention of "re-education trips" (A 1968/UVN)  
 13.4 Vote
- 19.00 - 20.30 The Nordic Council Presidium and the Chairs of the Committees' Seminar and Reception for the International Guests**
- 19:00 – 19:05 Welcome by Ms Oddný G. Harðardóttir, Vice President of the Nordic Council
- 19:05 – 19:15 Opening remarks by Ms. Þórdís Kolbrún R. Gylfadóttir, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Iceland
- 19:20 – 19:40 Keynote speech by Ms. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Head of the United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus
- 19:40 – 20:00 Discussion + Q & A
- 20:00 – 20:05 Closing remarks by Ms. Bryndís Haraldsdóttir, President of the Nordic Council
- 20:05 Reception hosted by the Nordic Council

**Thursday 31 October 2024**

**08.30- 13.30 Plenary Session**

- 08:30 - 09:30 14. The Presidium  
 14.1 Presidium proposal to set up a Nordic defence and security commission (A 1990/PRE)  
 14.2 Presidium proposal to strengthen the Nordic Council's work on cross-border freedom of movement (A 1984/PRE)  
 14.3 Presidium proposal to update the Helsinki Treaty (A 1989/PRE)  
 14.4 Vote

- 09:30 - 11:20
15. Sustainable Nordic Region
- 15.1 Committee proposal on the threat of climate change in the Arctic and the need for co-operation on sustainability (A 1991/UHN)
  - 15.2 Consideration of members' proposal on a moratorium on deep sea mining (A 1978/UHN)
  - 15.3 Consideration of members' proposal on transparency about fossil resources (A 1977/UHN)
  - 15.4 Consideration of members' proposal on Nordic co-operation on offshore wind power in the Baltic Sea (A 1976/UHN)
  - 15.5 Consideration of members' proposal on the export of waste water in the Nordic Region (A 1972/UHN)
  - 15.6 Consideration of members' proposal on common principles for Nordic producers' responsibility for textiles (A 1969/UHN)
  - 15.8 Consideration of members' proposal on support for small-scale agriculture (A 1960/UHN)
  - 15.9 Consideration of members' proposal on solar cells in large car parks (A 1959/UHN)
  - 15.10 Consideration of members' proposal on Nordic co-operation on biodiversity and nature conservation (A1950/UHN)
  - 15.11 Committee proposal on Nordic follow-up to the global agreement on biodiversity (A 1992/UHN)
  - 15.12 Vote
- 11:20 - 12:00
16. Knowledge and culture in the Nordic Region
- 16.1 Consideration of members' proposal on the contribution of culture and leisure to reducing the climate footprint of everyday life (A 1973/UKK)
  - 16.2 Consideration of members' proposal on joint Nordic regulation of the tech giants (A 1981/UKK)
  - 16.3 Delegation proposal on the Pisa survey (A 1986/UKK)
  - 16.4 Vote
- 12:30 - 13:00
17. Growth and Development in the Nordic Region
- 17.1 Committee proposal on better and simpler transport options in the Nordic Region (A 1955/UVU)
  - 17.2 Consideration of members' proposal on infrastructure for times of crisis (A 1988/UVU)
  - 17.3 Vote
- 13:00 - 13:15
18. Election 2025
- 18.1 Election of the President and Vice-president of the Nordic

Council, Document 14/2024  
18.2 Election of chairs and vice-chairs of the Nordic Council  
committees and the Control Committee, Document 14/2024  
18.3 Election of members of the Nordic Council Presidium,  
committees and commissions, Document 14/2024  
18.4 Election to the Board of the Nordic Culture Fund, Document

- 13:15 - 13:25      19. The programme for the Swedish Presidency of the Nordic Council in 2025  
19.1 The newly elected President presents the Swedish Presidency of the Nordic Council in 2025, Document 19/2024
- 13:25 - 13:30      20. Closing of the 2024 Session of the Nordic Council  
20.1 Decision and announcement of the time and venue for the 2025 Session of the Nordic Council  
20.2 Closing speech by the President of the Nordic Council