



Annual Report

2022

NORDEFCO

NORDIC DEFENCE COOPERATION

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Foreword

2022 was a historic year. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24 is the most extensive military aggression in Europe since the Second World War. The consequences for European and international security are far-reaching. We have witnessed the return of great power competition and the emergence of a new security order. These developments have led to significant changes for Nordic security and defence policy. Finland and Sweden have applied for NATO membership and Denmark has decided to opt-in on from EU defence cooperation. Furthermore, the Nordic countries have all made unprecedented measures in our efforts to support Ukraine, including donations of defence materiel, weapons and training.

With Finland and Sweden in NATO, all of the Nordic countries will be committed to assist each other under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. This represents a historic shift for Nordic defence cooperation. As future allies in NATO, we will be able to engage in deeper defence cooperation. This will strengthen NATO's Northern flank and the security of the Alliance as a whole. To meet the new strategic reality, we will adapt NORDEFECO.



At the Defence Ministers meeting in Kirkenes in May 2022, we agreed to update NORDEFECO's vision and purpose. Our ambition is to create a framework for Nordic defence cooperation that makes use of all the opportunities for deepened and enhanced defence cooperation that arise as all the Nordic countries become NATO allies. The Nordic countries possess significant, modern and highly capable armed forces. Through joint training, integrated planning and the ability to conduct operations seamlessly, the effectiveness of our defence can be greatly enhanced. Our strategic focus areas represent an important asset for our common security. The Chiefs of Defence have developed a common advice for how to develop the defence of the Nordic region within a NATO framework. We will host exercise "Nordic Response" in 2024, which will be a milestone for testing and developing Nordic defence plans in an allied framework.

I would like to thank all the Nordic countries for contributing to exercise Cold Response in spring 2022 in Northern Norway. The exercise demonstrated deterrence and defence of Europe's northern flank in a time of war in Europe. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my Nordic colleagues for contributing to the achievements attained during this historic year. I look forward to the coming year under Sweden's chairmanship of NORDEFECO.

Bjørn Arild Gram
Minister of Defence,
Norway

Nordic Defence Cooperation at the policy level

Norway's aim for 2022 was to implement the overarching goal of the NORDEFECO Vision for 2025: to improve the Nordic countries ability to act together in peace, crisis and conflict.

Six priorities were identified to guide this work:

- Strengthening operative cooperation
- Total defence
- Military security of supply
- New technology
- Nordic defence industry cooperation
- Nordic cooperation in the European Defence Fund (EDF)

As the year developed, focus turned to the war in Ukraine and Finland's and Sweden's application for NATO membership. There has been close and regular contact between our countries on all levels. The defence ministers met in Northern Norway in March during Exercise Cold Response, in Kirkenes in May for the NORDEFECO Ministerial, and in Oslo in November for the second NORDEFECO Ministerial. The ministers also met on Bornholm in May on Danish initiative and on Gotland in September on Swedish initiative. In addition to physical meetings, the classified NORDEFECO system has been used on a weekly basis. Close consultation among the Nordic countries on all levels has been important to share information, build situational awareness and develop our cooperation.



» The Nordic ministers of Defence in Kirkenes 11 May 2022.

Policy Cooperation

The overarching focus at the policy level was strengthening operational cooperation and civil-military cooperation. The war in Ukraine and subsequent Finnish and Swedish application for NATO membership have had significant impact on Nordic defence cooperation. Work in NORDEFECO shifted to adapting Nordic defence cooperation to a new strategic reality. At the NORDEFECO Ministerial in Kirkenes 11 May 2022, the defence ministers tasked the PSC to initiate the work on adapting NORDEFECO. A food-for-thought paper was developed, recommending to update NORDEFECO's Vision and organisation in order to accommodate for deepened and enhanced opportunities that arise as all the Nordic countries become NATO allies. At the NORDEFECO Ministerial in Oslo in November, the defence ministers agreed to create a new vision for NORDEFECO, and this work continues under Swedish chairmanship in 2023. Furthermore, The Nordic Chiefs of Defence (CHODs) initiated the development of a common advice for how to continue Nordic military cooperation as Finland and Sweden become NATO members. Norway took the initiative to develop the Norwegian invite exercise "Cold Response" to "Nordic Response" in 2024 to test and develop Nordic defence cooperation.

The Nordic countries have had close dialogue on the situation in Ukraine, as well as support to Ukraine. Throughout the year, there has been frequent dialogue on national policymaking and decisions to support to Ukraine, including materiel, weapons donations, training and other initiatives.



» M72 anti-tank weapons in support for Ukraine loaded onto a C-130J Hercules aircraft from the 335th Squadron of the Air Force.

Regarding Total Defence, the Haga-NORDEFECO dialogue was continued under Norway's chairmanship. Haga refers to Nordic cooperation in the area of public safety, rescue services and preparedness. Iceland chaired Haga cooperation in 2022. The second Haga-NORDEFECO directors meeting was held in Oslo in October 2022. The war in Ukraine demonstrates that the ability to respond to a variety of threats from a whole-of-society perspective is essential. All nations are dependent on the ability to respond to crises through international cooperation. Within the Haga-NORDEFECO dialogue, a working group produced a report on how Nordic civil and military authorities can cooperate closer with regard to CBRNE. The findings in the report suggest implementing CBRNE as an element in upcoming civil-military exercises in the Nordic region, including exercises such as Nordic Response in 2024. Furthermore, The Nordic Prime Ministers underlined the importance of enhanced cooperation on total defence and resilience in their joint statement on 15th August 2022.

Capability Cooperation

Within the capability area, the Norwegian chair highlighted four areas for closer cooperation during 2022.

The priorities were:

- Closer cooperation within the air domain
- A more integrated cooperation within the logistical area
- Possibilities for broader cooperation within Security of Supply (SoS)
- Suggestions for cooperation within the Space domain

The focus of the discussions has in parallel been the war in Ukraine and Finland's and Sweden's application for NATO membership.



» Bell 412 helicoptre in Northern Norway.

Within the air domain, the ad hoc working group on Nordic Cooperation of Air Command and Control (NORCACC), was established. NORCACC is built on already ongoing capability initiatives, such as the alternate landing base concept, cross border training and the initiatives within NORECAS. The overall role for NORCACC is to provide policy guidance, to coordinate efforts, and to present status to the capability directors on the possibility for building Nordic air ability. Cooperation with regards to Ground Based Air Defence, Basing and Cross-servicing, Nordic Visibility (USAFE) and Agile Combat Employment (USAFE), could also be of interest for future cooperation.



Logistics is another area where there is both a need, as well as possibilities, for deepened cooperation between the Nordic countries. Challenges within logistics will require regional and local cooperation. In the short term, the arrangement should be to follow up on NATO's plan making the JLSG Nordic for Nordic Response 24 (NR 24), in line with NATO plans.

With regards to the Annex of Security of Supply signed by all the Nordic countries 11 August 2022, and the establishment of a coordination board at MOD-level, these arrangements open up the possibility for different areas of interest to cooperate within. In addition to the ongoing cooperation within ammunition, movement and transportation are possible areas for strengthened cooperation.

Space was also a priority under Norway's chairmanship. Areas of interest for further cooperation, where Space could act as a facilitator, could be multi-domain operations and C2, Situational awareness and ISR, Targeting and threat warning and Connectivity in polar areas.

The Nordic CHOD's have established exercise Nordic Response in 2024 as a milestone for developing common Nordic defence concepts and plans. NR 24 could therefore also act as a milestone for capability development and the different work strands, as referred to above.

In light of Finland's and Sweden's applications for NATO-membership in May, the Norwegian chair initiated a capability dialogue on how to work more systematically on implementing common capability targets, to look more closely into regional aspects of capability developments, and integrate new national ambitions in a regional context relevant for multinational use through scenario based discussions. Furthermore, the dialogue has also touched up on how to streamline processes, bringing them closer to the respective everyday agenda and aligning the different national work with the Nordic agenda within NATO.

To situate this initial capability dialogue, the chair arranged a table-top discussion where the capability directors, through two different scenarios, discussed possible cooperation areas both in the short and longer term framework.



» Norwegian F-35 fighter jet.



» Meeting about the NORCACC initiative in Finland in December 2022.

Armaments Cooperation

Close dialogue between the Nordic National Armaments Directors (NAD) has been substantial throughout the year and executed in bilateral or multilateral arrangements, and often within the framework of NORDEFECO and NATO. Nevertheless, there has been milestones in the armaments cooperation throughout the year that are important to highlight and in line with the Norwegian priorities for the NORDEFECO 2022 chairmanship.

The signing of the contract for a joint combat uniform system has been an important milestone for Nordic defence cooperation in 2022. The Nordic Combat Uniform is the first NORDEFECO procurement of its kind as it is for the first time Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway join forces in a single procurement effort. Each nation signed individual contracts with the supplier, Oskar Pedersen AS, when the contract was signed in February 2022.



Signing of this contract is an achievement for NORDEFECO and for future armaments cooperation. Experience and lessons learned from this joint procurement can facilitate material cooperation in new areas to improve Nordic material cooperation in the long term. This provides prospects for carrying out joint Nordic acquisitions according to each country's military needs in other new areas of cooperation in the future.

One of the objectives of the Vision 2025 is to have an active and flexible partner in the Nordic defence industry in developing capabilities and finding new solutions to armaments and total defence requirements, through utilization of the possibilities inherent in the European Defence Fund (EDF). Norway has continued to prioritize EDF as an important area for cooperation.

The established expert-level working group on European Defence Fund (EDF) continued to explore and expand their efforts continuously to improve and create possibilities for cooperation for the Nordic countries within the EDF. The main objective for the working group has been to exchange best practice, share information, seek support for projects in a Nordic context, and discuss opportunities for cooperation in the future. The Nordic countries have identified projects together; however there are still unexplored possibilities and potential for cooperation within EDF. There is potential for more strategic, long term cooperation, which should start with involvement of the Nordic countries' long term planners to identify key areas to establish common projects in the EDF framework.

To support MCC in their annual search for collaborative opportunities in the armaments area, the NADs have initiated a supplementary process of strategic screening aimed at identifying high-level common requirements, which can provide a basis for collaborative projects between two or more NORDEFECO countries. Such requirements can be of a longer-term capability development nature or based on already operational material and subsequently include cooperation on sustainment, including maintenance and sharing of spare parts and upgrades. Sharing of already established contracts is a possibility in this context.



The Nordic Defence Industry Seminar (NDIS) was hosted by Denmark 1-2 June 2022. The overall theme of the seminar were national capabilities, needs and future armed forces on a longer perspective. More than 400 representatives from the industry and senior level armed forces officials attended the seminar. Over 100 Nordic companies were represented. The next Nordic Defence Industry seminar will be in Norway in 2024.

In August 2022, the NADs signed an Agreement on Nordic Security of Supply for Ammunition. This is a first step towards the Nordics developing a mutually supported Nordic security of supply framework, which also covers other areas of importance for collective Nordic defence and security. The signing is a beginning of creating a Nordic strategic partnership in the area of ammunition. Furthermore, this creates possibilities for several potential areas of cooperation, such as on transportation, fuel, spare parts, and food.

Military Coordination Committee (MCC)



» Iceland's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Thórdís Kolbrún Reykjaförð Gylfadóttir, in front of Finnish soldiers at exercise Cold Response 2022 in Norway.



» NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Norwegian Chief of Defence General Eirik Kristoffersen greeting soldiers from participating countries at Bardufoss Airport during exercise Cold Response 2022.



The Covid-19 pandemic and war in Ukraine has revealed weaknesses in our defence industries' production capacity and supply chains, leading to substantially longer lead times and price increases. This directly affects our nation's defence and security and requires close dialogue and cooperation with industry to alleviate negative consequences. To strengthen the already existing dialogue with the Nordic Defence and Security Industries Associations, NADs have decided to invite the CEOs of the largest Nordic defence industries to future meetings to find solutions of common interest.

The work in COPA ARMA will continue to adjust following the development of the security situation in Europe. The NATO accession process of Finland and Sweden will be followed closely and make up a regular discussion point at all COPA ARMA meetings.

MCC priorities 2022

- Operational cooperation
- Nordic Enhanced Cooperation on Air Surveillance (NORECAS)
- Support to Civil-Military cooperation on CBRNE
- Security of Supplies
- Support to SATCOM in the Arctic
- Vision 2025 Assessment

Since its conception in 2009, the overall objective of NORDEFECO on the military level has been to achieve cost-effectiveness and quality in all cooperation and interest areas of Nordic defence cooperation, thereby creating enhanced national operational capability and interoperability in the Nordic region. While NORDEFECO military activities and initiatives have reflected the general development in international security environment, 2022 proved to be an exceptional year with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine 24 February 2022. As the world changed, so did Nordic military cooperation.

Throughout 2021 and 2022, the military level in NORDEFECO and other Nordic initiatives actively contributed to build shared awareness of the situation leading up to the invasion of Ukraine. During the Finnish chairmanship of NORDEFECO in 2021, monitoring and sharing information and assessments on Russian exercises and movements, in particular the ZAPAD exercises, became a regular topic in NORDEFECO meetings at military level. This continued in 2022, and special meeting formats were established as the situation deteriorated leading up to the invasion of Ukraine. These meetings included the Baltic countries in several instances, as part of the established dialogue between NORDEFECO and the Baltics.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has had significant impact on Nordic military cooperation. The subsequent Finnish and Swedish applications for NATO further strengthened the already ongoing military cooperation between the Nordic countries. A common security affiliation in NATO opens new opportunities for the Nordic countries and the region in all cooperation areas. Achievements and experiences over the years of NORDEFECO work has established a level of common and mutual understanding that is of particular value when supporting Finnish and Swedish integration in NATO.

MCC priorities for 2022 reflected and supported policy level priorities, and were all met. The historic developments of 2022 added relevance and importance to these priorities, with focus on operational needs as the primary driver for military cooperation.



» Norwegian, Finnish and Swedish Ministers of Defence; Bjørn Arild Gram, Anti Kaikkonen and Pål Jonson signing updated Trilateral Statement of Intent, November 2022

Ongoing trilateral efforts on operational planning were aligned and coordinated as a key element of operational cooperation. To support these efforts, and to meet the changing security situation, the Chiefs of Defence initiated a Nordic defence concept as a framework and guidance for more practical work on operational level. These initiatives created a good foundation and gave a head start for further cooperation resulting from Finnish and Swedish applications for NATO membership.

In light of the changed security situation and Finnish and Swedish aspiration to become NATO members, Finland, Norway and Sweden decided to renew the trilateral Statement of Intent (SOI) which was signed in November 2022. The common goal of the renewed SOI is to enhance and strengthen operations planning and improve interoperability among the armed forces.

Joint training and exercises is an essential part of the increased focus and efforts on operational cooperation. The planned Norwegian invite exercise COLD RESPONSE 2024 has been renamed NORDIC RESPONSE. Preparations and execution of the exercise will be used by the Nordic countries as an environment to develop and refine the Nordic defence concept and plans. Within the NORDEFECO framework the Nordic countries are working on further strengthening cooperation on planning joint training and exercises in general to support common plans.



» Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish Army Chiefs with Finnish soldiers at exercise Cold Response 2022.

Operations, cooperation and support between nations demands preparations, plans and procedures to ease movement across borders. This is not a unique military issue; it also affects civilian preparedness and resilience such as national total defence. NORDEFECO has for years across several cooperation areas and forums sought to make border crossing easier and more effective. In 2022, the chiefs of logistics identified concrete challenges, resulting in new work-strains on biological border protection and common education and training on NATO tools and procedures for logistics support. Within the capability domain, a specific effort looking into creating joint Nordic logistic capabilities and creating a Joint Logistical Support Network (JLSG) was initiated. Similarly, work was initiated to investigate the possibilities for Nordic cooperation on aeromedical evacuation.

The recurring process between the Nordic countries of identifying opportunities for armaments cooperation continued in 2022, both on bilateral or multilateral possibilities for acquisition, continued development on best practice based on experience, and through cooperation with the Nordic defence industry. In a combined policy and military level effort, Denmark hosted the biennial Nordic Defence Industry Seminar. The changed security situation with the following applications for NATO membership from Finland and Sweden created new urgency and possibilities in armaments cooperation, and increased involvement and new initiatives have been signalled from both policy and military level.



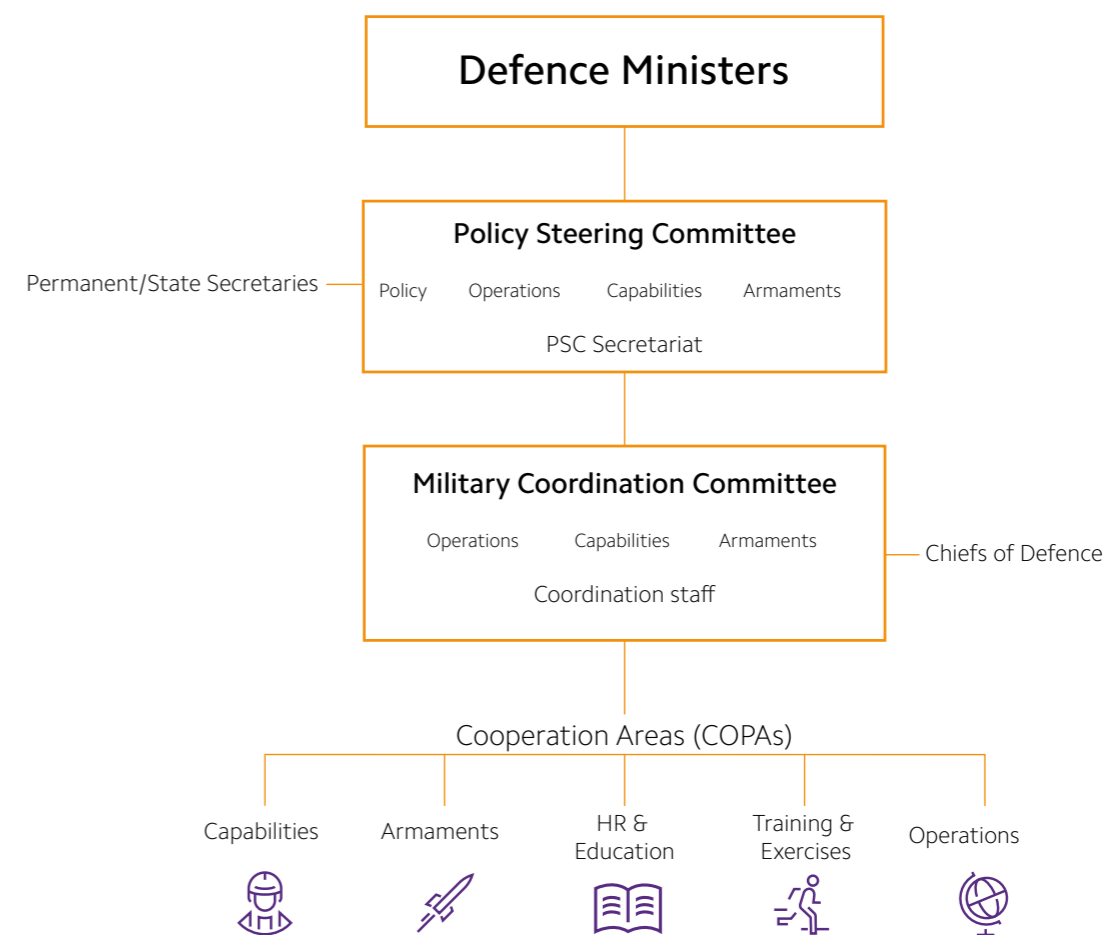
Within the area of Human Resources and Education, the Nordic countries continued their extended cooperation in 2022. To further the development of common Nordic professional military education, a dedicated body and a conference of deans was established. Cooperation between the Nordic defence colleges will be of particular importance when Finland and Sweden are transitioning into NATO membership, and to enhance the common understanding of a Nordic defence concept at the operational level.



In conclusion, the military leadership in NORDEFECO in 2022 saw significant changes to the cooperation. Against a backdrop of war in Europe, NORDEFECO was able to monitor the development through already established procedures and solutions, finding the existing relationship to be a strength in managing support to Ukraine and our regional security. Within the future of a new NATO, NORDEFECO has proved to be prepared and able to support the transition and strengthen our regional security and operational capability through existing programs and new initiatives. Initiating the development of a Nordic defence concept has been a central part of the continued relevance of NORDEFECO, and a direct cause for lifting the cooperation into the centre stage of each member country.

NORDEFECO structure

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which established the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO) in 2009, the purpose of the cooperation is to strengthen the Participants' national defence, explore common synergies and facilitate efficient common solutions. The one-year chairmanship rotates between the Nordic countries, excluding Iceland. Norway held the chairmanship in 2022. The chair is responsible for leading and developing the cooperation in line with the goals outlined in NORDEFECO's long-term Vision 2025. The NORDEFECO structure includes both policy and military cooperation levels.



At the top are the Nordic Ministers of Defence, who as a minimum meet twice a year. In 2022, they met six times, including virtual crisis consultations. The day-to-day work at the policy level is carried out by the Policy Steering Committee (PSC), where the Nordic states are represented by senior departmental officers. The PSC has a Secretariat, which acts as the preparatory body. At the military level, the Chiefs of Defence meet a minimum of twice a year; once with the Military Coordination Committee (MCC), and once with the National Armament Directors. The MCC coordinates activities at the military level, with the MCC Coordination Staff acting as its preparatory body.

Sweden's chairmanship of NORDEF CO 2023

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is the most extensive military aggression in Europe since the Second World War. Russia's actions are a flagrant violation of international law and the European security order. The negative effects for European and international security are far-reaching. In this new security environment, Finland and Sweden have applied for NATO membership and Denmark has abolished its opt-out from the EU defence cooperation. These decisions will have a profound impact on the prerequisites for future Nordic defence cooperation and open new possibilities for deepened operational cooperation.

Enhanced Nordic defence cooperation in a new security context

In line with the guidance from the November 2022 NORDEF CO ministerial meeting, a new vision for enhanced and stronger Nordic defence cooperation will be developed in 2023. Furthermore, closer coordination of the drafting of national defence white books and long-term plans will be promoted.

Support to Ukraine

The Nordic countries are committed to support Ukraine politically and financially as well as with military training and equipment. Where applicable, the Nordic countries will coordinate their support to Ukraine aiming to identify possibilities to join efforts for greater effect.

Nordic-Baltic Cooperation

Seeking to address common interests and challenges the Nordic and Baltic countries will continue and strengthen cooperation at all relevant levels.

Operational Cooperation

Aiming to enhance the capability to conduct combined or coordinated military operations, relevant parts of the Nordic trilateral forums of cooperation will be merged with NORDEF CO. Furthermore, the scope for common operations planning will be considered for areas of mutual interest.

Capability Cooperation

Nordic capability cooperation will adapt to the new security context by:

- Promoting Nordic defence capability cooperation in relation to NATO processes such as the NDPP.
- Reviewing ongoing capability formats and projects in NORDEF CO.
- Promoting work to improve the capability to receive and move military units and formations within our region. This will build upon and complement ongoing work on improving military mobility.



Training and Exercises

Develop a Nordic approach to the inclusion of third parties in exercises.

Armaments Cooperation

Measures for more proactive and increased Nordic armaments cooperation will be reviewed and addressed. The review will include areas such as Security of Supply, Rapid Procurement and Identification of Common Procurement Opportunities. To identify common Nordic projects, the strategic and forward-screening efforts initiated in 2022 will continue in 2023.



NORDEFCO Vision for 2025

“We will improve our defence capability and cooperation in peace, crisis and conflict. We ensure a close Nordic political and military dialogue on security and defence. Acknowledging our different security affiliations, we pursue an agenda based on joint security perspectives, efficient and cost-effective cooperation to strengthen our national defences and the ability to act together.”

In order to operationalize the vision, we will strive towards the following targets. By 2025 we have:

- Minimal restrictions on movement and storage of military units and equipment, between and through the nations in support of national and multinational activities, operations and deployments.
- Increased cooperation in total defence, military security of supply and civil-military cooperation.
- Improved regional and common situational awareness in peace, crisis and conflict, in all relevant domains, through real-time information- and data sharing.
- Enhanced NORDEFCO as a platform for crisis consultation and established mechanisms for that purpose.
- Improved our readiness and sustainability in order to improve our ability to act together.
- Coordinated relevant training and exercises between the Nordic countries, and we have improved interoperability.
- Enhanced our transatlantic relations by seeking closer cooperation in areas such as training, exercises and other activities, and improved cooperation with our European partners.
- Continued to strengthen our dialogue and cooperation with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.
- Improved our resilience in light of the dangers posed by hybrid threats and growing cyber threats.
- Coordinated our international operations with a focus on national contributions, command and control and joint logistics, when possible.
- Enhanced our engagement in capacity building efforts to promote stability and security in conflict areas.
- Established logistical cooperation where possible and desirable, with mutual measures to support national needs in crisis and conflict.
- Established a strategic dialogue to enhance capability development in order to meet the requirements needed to address the security environment.
- An active and flexible partner in the Nordic defence industry in developing capabilities and finding new solutions to armaments and total defence requirements, including through utilization of the possibilities inherent in the proposed European Defence Fund as well as other relevant fora and instruments.
- Established options for common education and training to maximize effectiveness and availability in all Nordic development and procurement programs.
- Enhanced our armaments coordination and cooperation.

We will continue to explore and adopt new beneficial possibilities for cooperation, which may emerge.