





STATE OF THE REGION

Analysis of Danish-Swedish Cooperation 2026

ØRESUNDS INSTITUTTET
ANALYSIS



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An analysis from the independent Danish-Swedish knowledge centre Øresundsinstituttet.

Øresundsinstituttet alone is responsible for the report's analysis and conclusions.

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The Most Accessible Region in the Nordics

The fact that commuting, passenger travel and freight traffic across the Øresund are increasing, the first two reaching record levels, is a positive sign for the Danish-Swedish region. But integration continues to meet obstacles, such as border controls and uncertainty surrounding pensions.

We must stop talking about young people and instead talk to them about the opportunities to work and study across the Øresund. That is the focus of a three-year EU-Interreg project run by Øresundsinstituttet in cooperation with, among others, Øresunddirekt, Region Skåne, Lund University and Roskilde University.

It is also time to look outwards. Lobbying for more and faster infrastructure development sometimes obscures the fact that the Øresund has already become the most accessible region in the Nordic countries, with the largest airport, SAS investing heavily, the forthcoming Fehmarn Belt tunnel, the Øresund Bridge and new transport corridors through Sweden and Denmark. There are also many growing ports.

This year is unique, with elections to both the Danish parliament (Folketinget) and the Swedish parliament (Riksdagen), following the Danish municipal and regional elections in autumn 2025. For Greater Copenhagen, the elections mean new people on the board and new ministers for Nordic cooperation joining the Greater Copenhagen Task Force. Denmark already has a new centre-left government, while the Swedish government negotiations are hemmed in by red lines. In addition, Region Zealand and the Capital Region of Denmark will merge next year to form Region Østdanmark, as part of the Danish healthcare reform.

Malmö, 2 November 2026

Johan Wessman
CEO of Øresundsinstituttet



Accessibility

Øresund is becoming the most accessible region in the Nordic countries. P. 10.



Border Obstacles

New border obstacles keep emerging. Two current ones concern pensions and sick leave. P. 12.



Young Commuting

Interreg project examining young people's cross-border commuting. P. 18.



National Elections

Sweden and Denmark have held parliamentary elections. P. 30.



New in Post

New faces in Øresund cooperation. See page 62.



Organisations

The most important organisations in the region. See page 66.

Record Year for Øresund – the Political Map Is Being Redrawn

A record number of commuters and travellers are crossing the Øresund. At the same time, the Øresund region faces a political shift as Region Østdanmark is created on 1 January 2027. Øresund is already the most accessible region in the Nordic countries, and investment in Copenhagen Airport and the Fehmarn Belt tunnel will strengthen accessibility further. The elections in Sweden and Denmark brought mild left-wing winds, but historically weak results for the Social Democrats in each country.

The Year Gone By has been a successful one for the Øresund region and Danish-Swedish cooperation. The first half of 2026 brought new records for passenger and commuter journeys by car, train and ferry across the Øresund. More than 100,000 passenger journeys a day were recorded across the sound in the first six months of the year, 3.5 per cent more than in the same period last year. Cross-border commuting in the region has also hit a new peak, with 23,748 commuters in the second quarter of 2026, up six per cent on the same period in 2025. The number of commuters thus continues to rise, a trend that has held since society reopened after the coronavirus pandemic.



The number of journeys across the Øresund rose across the board in the first half of 2026.

The Year Ahead brings a major political change in the Øresund region: the new Region Østdanmark. On 1 January 2027 the giant region will be formally created through a merger of the Capital Region of Denmark and Region Zealand. It will be home to almost half of Denmark's population and led by the chair of the regional council, Lars Gaardhøj (S).



Lars Gaardhøj (S), chair of the regional board of the Capital Region of Denmark, will lead the new Region Østdanmark.

The Reform is Expected to affect how the Danish regions can work across borders. The merger could mean less focus on cooperation across the Øresund. At the same time, the region is important for the development and economic growth of eastern Denmark, not least in recruiting Scanian labour across the sound. In the longer term there are also opportunities to broaden cross-border work. The Capital Region previously had Sweden as its nearest neighbour, while Region Zealand had Germany. With the new region the neighbouring area grows, opening the door to broader cooperation across both the German and Swedish borders.

The Øresund Region Is the Most Accessible in the Nordic Countries. Accessibility will also improve as Copenhagen Airport expands, the Fehmarn Belt tunnel is built and infrastructure in the region is developed. On the Danish side, a Fehmarn Belt corridor is being built between Rødbyhavn and the Øresund Bridge, and from summer 2028 at least four rail operators are expected to run services between Copenhagen and Hamburg. Four days before the election, the Swedish government decided that the Swedish share of the Øresund Bridge's surplus, around SEK 25 billion up to 2050, will go to infrastructure in the region.

Many Could Become Even More as the EU-Interreg project "Cross-Border Commuting across Øresund with Young People in Focus" generates knowledge about why young people choose (or choose not) to commute. Companies in the region can use these lessons when recruiting from the other side of the sound. SAS's major investment at Copenhagen Airport is expected to generate up to 25,000 jobs in Denmark and southern Sweden, which could boost commuting. In addition, a new certification scheme will make it easier for third-country nationals resident in Sweden to take a job in the neighbouring country.



Swedish HR staff are a key success factor when Danish companies recruit across the border.



The left-wing parties Socialistisk Folkeparti and Enhedslisten, and Sweden's Vänsterpartiet, made gains in both elections.

Mild Left-Wing Winds in the Nordic Countries, but headwinds for the Social Democrats.That is a brief summary of the elections in Sweden and Denmark. In both countries the Social Democrats had historically poor results, but in Denmark Mette Frederiksen (S) nevertheless held on to power. The new centre-left government, "the Four-Leaf Clover Government", consists of Socialdemokratiet, Moderaterne, Radikale Venstre and Socialistisk Folkeparti. It is supported by the left-wing Enhedslisten and the green Alternativet. In Sweden the red-greens have a majority, but what the future government will look like remains uncertain, with many knots still to untie.

The Geopolitical Situation is putting Nordic cooperation higher on the agenda, and the window is open for drawing the countries closer together. Nordic cooperation is clearly set out in the new Danish government's declaration.

Rush Across the Øresund

Journeys per day, first half of 2026

Passenger journeys		Freight traffic	
107,331	↑ 3,5%	**3,552**	↑ 6,8%

Refers to the average total number of journeys per day via the Øresund Bridge (car and train) and by ferry between Helsingborg and Helsingør in the first half of 2026. Percentage change compared with the same period in 2025.

Record Number of Commuters

Øresund commuters, second quarter of 2026

Commuters	
23,748	↑ 6%

Number of commuters travelling between Denmark and Sweden via the Öresund Bridge (by car and train) and on the Helsingborg–Helsingør ferry during the first quarter of 2026. Percentage change compared with the same period in 2025.
Source: The Öresund Database



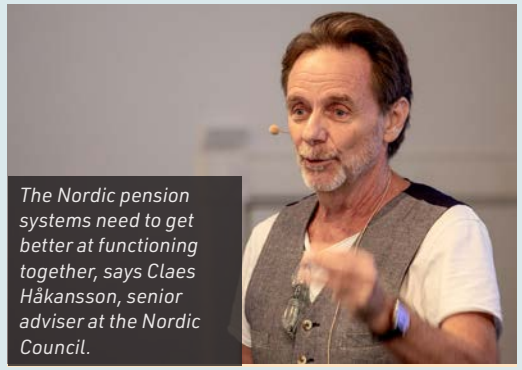
SAS is making major investments at Copenhagen Airport in Kastrup, which is expected to generate up to 25,000 new jobs in Denmark and southern Sweden. Arlanda is losing ground relative to the Danish airport.



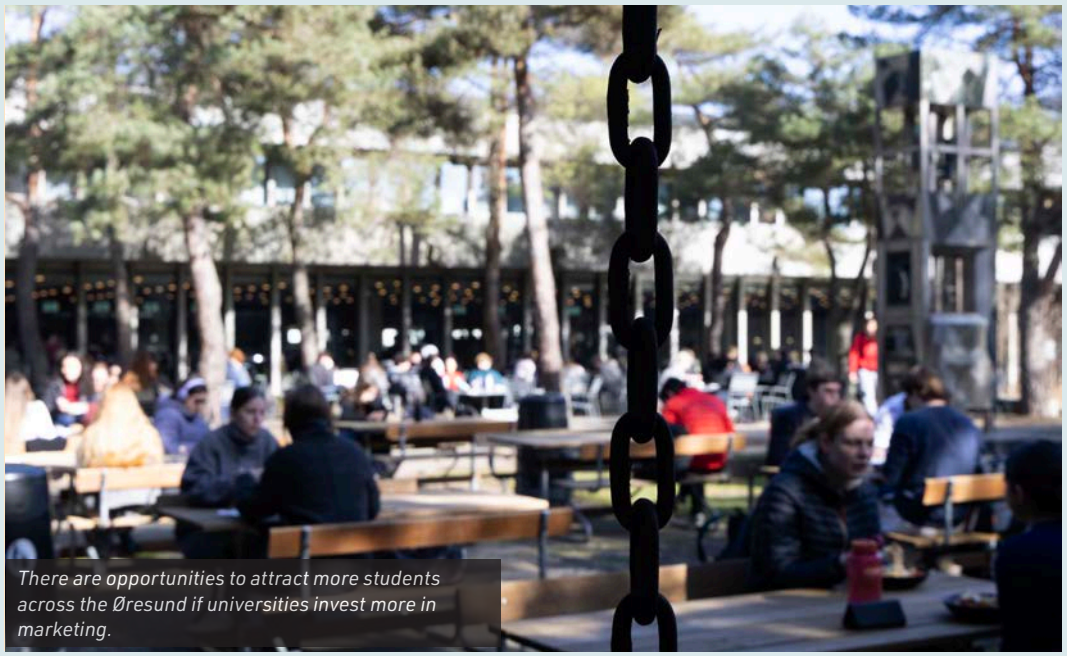
At the turn of the year the Capital Region of Denmark and Region Zealand will merge to form Region Østdanmark, which will be led by Lars Gaardhøj (S).



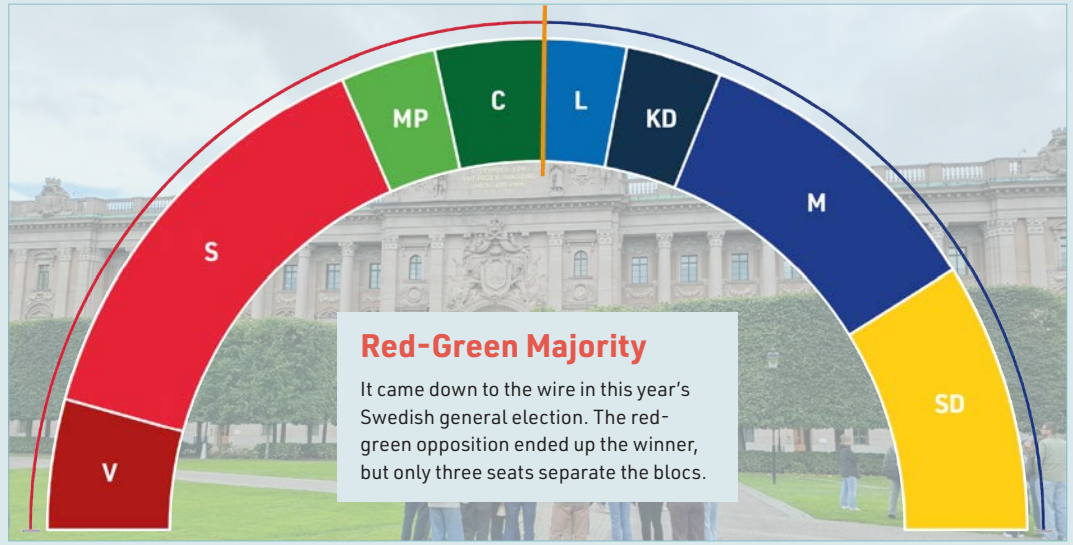
New rules leave some sick cross-border commuters without support, says Paméla Jönsson-Blais of the Swedish Social Insurance Agency.



The Nordic pension systems need to get better at functioning together, says Claes Håkansson, senior adviser at the Nordic Council.



There are opportunities to attract more students across the Øresund if universities invest more in marketing.



Red-Green Majority

It came down to the wire in this year's Swedish general election. The red-green opposition ended up the winner, but only three seats separate the blocs.



Closer business cooperation, fewer digital obstacles and better labour-market matching across the sound are three key issues for Denmark's newly appointed minister for social affairs and Nordic cooperation, Monika Rubin (M).



"Preparedness should create value even in peacetime," says Jonas Berg, Region Skåne's new director of preparedness.



Øresundsinstituttet has stepped up its efforts to create contacts across the Øresund by organising conferences, Danish-Swedish networking meetings and special trips between the countries.

Part I

NEWS

- The Øresund Is the Nordic Region with the Best Accessibility
- Border Obstacles: Sick Leave and Pensions
- What's New in Danish-Swedish Cooperation
- Why Young People Study in the Neighbouring Country
- Young People's Commuting



The opening of the extended railway platform at Copenhagen Airport. From left: Lars Gaardhøj, chair of the regional council, the Capital Region of Denmark; Carl Johan Sonesson, chair of the regional board, Region Skåne; and Mikkel Hemmingsen, CEO of Sund & Bælt.

THE ØRESUND REGION

Greatest Accessibility in the Nordics

Copenhagen's fast-growing airport is the largest in the Nordic countries and is being expanded, while serving as the hub for SAS's major investment into new long-haul flights. The Fehmarn Belt tunnel is under construction, with a transport corridor from the Øresund Bridge to Rødbyhavn. Railways in northern Germany and southern Sweden are being upgraded, though behind schedule. Ports are growing. The Øresund is becoming the most accessible region in the Nordic countries.

The Vilhelm Lauritzen Terminal at Copenhagen Airport was teeming with people on the last day of June this year. Danish and Swedish politicians, business leaders, journalists, PR staff and SAS Group CEO Anko van der Werff were all there.

SAS Makes a Major Push at Copenhagen Airport

"Connectivity" was a word Anko van der Werff returned to several times as he explained that SAS, celebrating its 80th anniversary, is investing heavily in Copenhagen Airport as a global hub. It is ordering up to 40 long-haul aircraft from Airbus, with a combined list price of more than USD 10 billion, or over SEK 100 billion.

With the airport expanding while SAS invests heavily in new aircraft, accessibility improves for the whole Øresund region, from northern Germany to far up in Sweden. That benefits business and tourism, both outbound and inbound. The region's labour market is also strengthened, directly through new airport jobs and indirectly through growing suppliers, as business and tourism across the region gain new opportunities.

If SAS's growth strategy succeeds, it is expected to create 25,000 new jobs by 2030, nearly 4,000 of them in southern Sweden, according to a new SAS analysis. That would increase demand for commuters from Sweden.

Increased Focus on New Transport Corridors

Road and rail accessibility between the Nordic countries and the rest of Europe is also improving. The debate now centres on two corridors: the Fehmarn Belt corridor from Rødbyhavn to the Øresund Bridge, and the Øresund corridor for rail from the bridge to Hallsberg in central Sweden.

While Danish state-owned infrastructure company Sund & Bælt builds the Fehmarn Belt tunnel to Germany, Denmark is also investing heavily in the Fehmarn Belt corridor, with road and rail from Rødbyhavn to the Øresund Bridge. This is currently visible in the widening of the Øresund Motorway at Copenhagen Airport and a bypass track for trains on the Øresund Line at Kalvebod. This summer the extended railway station at the airport opened, along with the new Storstrøm Bridge, named the Queen Margrethe II Bridge, the country's third-longest bridge after the Great Belt Bridge and the Øresund Bridge. A few years ago the new 250 km/h railway between Copenhagen and Ringsted opened, and the rest of the line towards Rødbyhavn is being upgraded to double track for 200 km/h. Denmark's decision to build a single corridor has been rewarded with substantial EU funding.

Germany and Sweden Build with Delays

To handle the rising road and rail traffic the Fehmarn Belt tunnel will bring, infrastructure, mainly railways, is being expanded in northern Germany and southern Sweden, though with delays. The tunnel itself has also been delayed, and a new timetable will be presented.

The Swedish Transport Administration (Trafikverket) and Sweden's infrastructure minister, Andreas Carlson (KD), promised at a meeting in Lund in mid-June that the pace of work on the four-track railway between Lund and Hässleholm will increase.

The Øresund Corridor Matters for All of Sweden

"With the Fehmarn Belt tunnel, it will take three hours by train to Hamburg from the Malmö-Copenhagen area, but the Øresund corridor stretches all the way up to Hallsberg," said Øresundsbron CEO Linus Eriksson, speaking to a group of Swedish visitors at Denmark's Folkemødet on Bornholm in June.

"The centre of gravity in northern Europe is becoming more and more important. But the benefits really apply to Stockholm-Copenhagen-Hamburg, and if that corridor works, it is good for everyone in between too. We must dare to think of our part as belonging to a bigger picture. Then it becomes more interesting to a national politician than if it is a local issue."

Rail Operators Invest in Services to Hamburg

Rail companies have already seen the opportunities that the Fehmarn Belt tunnel's improved accessibility will create. In summer 2028, at least four operators will run services between Copenhagen and Hamburg: DSB/Deutsche Bahn's own services, the Czech České dráhy, Sweden's Snälltåget and Norway's Vy.

Sweden's Bridge Profits to Be Used in Skåne

The Øresund Bridge is doing well, with new traffic records and loans being repaid faster than expected. Four days before the September election, the Swedish government announced that the Swedish share of the bridge's future surplus will be used for infrastructure in the region: around SEK 25 billion up to 2050, in 2024 prices.

The Skåne County Administrative Board and County Governor Peter Danielsson have been tasked with identifying the measures that would deliver the greatest benefit and negotiating them with the municipalities and regions concerned. The aim is to strengthen growth, transport and preparedness.

Growing Ports Important for Preparedness

It is not only roads, railways and new bridges and tunnels that handle Denmark's and Sweden's transport flows. The many ports are part of the infrastructure and matter for preparedness. Skåne has four large, growing ports: Helsingborg, Trelleborg, Ystad and Copenhagen Malmö Port, which is unique in operating ports in two countries. Eastern Denmark also has important ports in Køge, Elsinore, Kalundborg, Rødbyhavn and Rønne, the last of which will serve as a hub for Baltic Sea wind power development. Traffic to Poland is growing in Trelleborg and Ystad.



SAS CEO Anko van der Werff and Benoît de Saint-Exupéry, Executive Vice President Sales of the Commercial Aircraft business, after a press conference at Copenhagen Airport on 30 June about SAS's record aircraft order.


One of the elements for the Fehmarn Belt tunnel.


The extended railway station at Copenhagen Airport.

PRESS PHOTO: ČESKÉ DRÁHY


The rail link between Copenhagen and Prague will be operated by the Czech railway company České dráhy.



The port of Ystad has extensive ferry services to Poland as well as fast ferries to Rønne on Bornholm.

BORDER OBSTACLES

Sick Cross-Border Commuters Risk Being Left with No Income at All

After four months on sick leave, Øresund commuters who work in Denmark risk ending up with no sickness benefit at all. In Denmark, employees who are off sick for more than four months in a year are often dismissed, and if the person lives in Sweden, they are then moved to the Swedish sickness benefit system. But since October 2025 the Swedish Social Insurance Agency has followed new rules under which income from abroad is not counted when the sickness benefit qualifying income (SGI) is set in Sweden. The same applies to people dismissed before going on parental leave.

Anyone who works for a Danish employer and spends at least 50 per cent of their time in Denmark is usually covered by Danish social insurance, even if they live in Sweden. That means Danish authorities pay out, for example, sickness or parental benefit. But if an Øresund commuter leaves or is dismissed from their job in Denmark, social insurance moves to the country of residence, Sweden, and the Swedish Social Insurance Agency takes over responsibility for sickness or parental benefit.

The problem arises because the agency's new interpretation means income from Denmark may not be counted when SGI is calculated in Sweden. If the person has no Swedish income, SGI is set at zero. A person on sick leave then receives no sickness benefit at all, and a person on parental leave receives parental benefit at the basic level (see fact box).

Those with a permanent injury, illness or disability affecting their ability to work for the rest of their lives can apply for sickness compensation in Sweden. Other sick former Øresund commuters are left to live on savings and, as a last resort, apply for financial assistance from their municipality.

The change came about because the agency concluded that it had not previously followed EU rules, and it therefore produced new guidelines that have applied since mid-October 2025.

In Sweden, as in the other Nordic countries except Denmark, a person on sick leave keeps their job and therefore remains insured in the country of work. The problem thus does not arise for sick Øresund commuters who live in Denmark and work in Sweden. But because Danish rules allow dismissal after four months (120 days) of sick leave within twelve months, combined with EU law, commuters who live in Sweden and work in Denmark are affected.

FACT: Sickness Benefit Qualifying Income (SGI)

SGI is calculated from what a person is expected to earn over the next six months or, if that is not available, from income over recent years. SGI is normally set at the same amount as annual salary, with a ceiling of SEK 592,000 for 2026.

Sickness benefit and parental benefit are calculated from SGI. Both levels of compensation are about 80 per cent of SGI.

Parental benefit has a basic level that everyone can receive: SEK 250 a day, or about SEK 7,500 a month. Sickness benefit has no basic level, so if SGI is calculated at zero, the compensation is also zero.



Claes Håkansson, senior adviser at the Nordic Council, spoke about the problems of receiving pensions from two countries at the border obstacle meeting at Kosmopol in Copenhagen.

Pensions a Major Source of Uncertainty for Nordic Cross-Border Commuters

The Nordic countries have the world's best pension systems, each on its own, but anyone with a pension in more than one country immediately runs into problems. To remedy this, a Nordic pensions agreement should be reached. That is the conclusion of the report Når pensionen krydser grænser, produced for the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The most important conclusion of the report is that there should be an agreement on pensions earned in a Nordic country other than the one where a person lives. Claes Håkansson, senior adviser at the Nordic Council, who works on border obstacles among other issues, presented the report at the annual Border obstacle meeting in Copenhagen in September this year. During the meeting, those who had only worked in one Nordic country were asked to raise their hands.

"Lucky you!" exclaimed Håkansson.

"I say that because when you get your orange envelope (the pension statement, Editor's note), you can actually see how much pension you will receive. You also know where to pay tax and which authority to turn to with questions."

He said the Nordic countries each have the world's best pension systems, but when a person is to receive a pension from more than one country, it becomes difficult. The systems do not talk to each other, the rules are interpreted differently, and citizens have to become their own project managers to find out what they will get.

With bad luck, the pension may also be taxed twice, especially for occupational pensions.

The work on the report began with an attempt to obtain statistics on how many people have a pension in more than one country, but it failed.

"I think we are approaching between 100,000 and 200,000 people with a pension in both Sweden and Denmark. In the whole of the Nordic region we get to one to one and a half million people, but we do not know," said Håkansson.

To remedy this, the authors recommend that the Nordic countries revise the current Nordic tax agreement so that all taxation of occupational pensions takes place in the country where they were earned. Through mutual recognition of occupational pension schemes, no tax would be levied in the country of residence. This requires no harmonisation of rules and would also simplify administration and make things clearer for citizens.

They also propose an agreement between the Nordic countries on how to handle cross-border pensions, with response times, contact channels and procedures for handling deviations. They also want a digital Nordic pension portal with links to the right authorities, making it easier for citizens to find their way.



The report was produced by Resonans Nordic and KPMG Acor Tax on behalf of the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

News from this Year



SAS Makes Historic Investment in Copenhagen

SAS is investing heavily in Copenhagen Airport and ordering 40 new long-haul aircraft from Airbus. The investment, worth around SEK 100 billion and the largest in its history, is to make Copenhagen a hub for long-haul travel. If SAS's growth strategy succeeds, the investment could create around 25,000 new jobs by 2030, nearly 4,000 of them in southern Sweden. Besides Copenhagen, there are also plans to add more long-haul routes from Oslo Gardermoen and Stockholm Arlanda.

30 New High-Speed Trains has been ordered by the Swedish state-owned railway company SJ, worth about SEK 19 billion, SJ's largest investment ever. The trains have a top speed of 250 kilometres an hour, but the rail network has a top speed of 200. With the order, SJ wants to create an incentive for Trafikverket to build tracks and infrastructure that can handle higher speeds.

Swedish Commuters' Incomes Rise

Malmö residents who commuted across the Øresund earned SEK 9 billion in Denmark in 2024. That is a doubling since 2021 and means that roughly nine per cent of Malmö residents' total earned income comes from the neighbouring country, according to figures from Statistics Sweden (SCB). Average income has risen by about 30 per cent since 2021. More commuters across the Øresund and historically rising average incomes in Denmark are believed to lie behind the trend.

Sweden Follows Denmark on Port Preparedness

Train ferries will continue to run between Trelleborg and Rostock until 2031. A new agreement was signed this year between Trafikverket and Stena Line. It was concluded to fulfil a government assignment to secure train ferry services between Sweden and Germany, so that rail traffic to the Continent does not depend solely on the Øresund Bridge. It is a strategic fallback in the event of lengthy disruption to rail traffic. In 2025 the Danish Ministry of Transport expropriated the former ferry berths at the Great Belt Bridge so that ferry services could resume if the bridge were closed for a long period.



Public Transport Costs in Focus – Prices Under Pressure

One of the Danish "Four-Leaf Clover Government's" pledges is that everyone under 22 will travel free in future. The proposal is close to the policy long pursued by Enhedslisten, which supports the government. Whether it will also apply on Øresund trains to Sweden is unclear. However, Sweden's current halving of the price of monthly public transport passes applies to journeys across the Øresund until the end of December.



Sweden-Denmark Preparedness Cooperation Focuses on Bornholm

The Skåne County Administrative Board is now beginning preparedness cooperation with Danish authorities. The starting point for the initial discussions is a scenario in which Bornholm needs to be evacuated. So says Kajsa Helmbring, the board's director of defence.

According to Helmbring, it has been difficult for Swedish authorities to find the right contacts on the Danish side, but in November the County Administrative Board and the Danish agency Styrelsen for Samfundssikkerhed (SAMSIK) are to hold a first meeting. Swedish and Danish municipalities, the Swedish Police Authority and Trafikverket will also take part.



Mette Frederiksen Second Most Powerful on the Continent

"The North Star" is how the American news site Politico describes Denmark's prime minister, placing her second on its list of Europe's most powerful people. The article opens with "We're all living in Mette Frederiksen's Europe. We just don't know it yet". The reasoning is that Frederiksen has quietly exported her own version of social democracy to the Continent: a blend of left-wing welfare policy with more right-leaning migration and defence policy. Along the way she has also rid her own party of its EU scepticism. The prime minister is also praised for Denmark's consistent support for Ukraine.



EU: Scrap the Border Controls

The European Commission is urging Sweden, Denmark and several other member states to end temporary internal border controls. Sweden has had border controls on travellers from Denmark and Germany since the refugee crisis of 2015. According to the Commission, Sweden has not shown that the controls are necessary and proportionate. They have also been criticised as both expensive and ineffective. The Commission also argues that the EU's migration and asylum pact and the new border control system make the controls obsolete. According to the Greater Copenhagen report "10 Years of Temporary Internal Border Control", only three in 10,000 people checked were stopped, while the cost is estimated at about SEK 47 million a year.

Demonstrations Against the US in Denmark and Greenland

On 17 January, thousands of people demonstrated in Denmark and in Greenland's capital, Nuuk. The cause was President Trump and his ambitions to take over the world's largest island, which is also an autonomous part of Denmark.



PHOTO: NICHOLAI VALBAK

Easier to Bring in Foreign Labour to Denmark

Denmark is getting a new certification scheme that makes it possible to recruit foreign nationals from 16 selected countries outside the EU. This also opens the way for more third-country nationals resident in Sweden to apply for jobs in Denmark. More demands are placed on companies, as employees must, among other things, be covered by a collective agreement, and foreign staff are entitled to a minimum salary of at least DKK 322,000 a year at 2026 levels. Previously, the pay limit scheme required at least DKK 552,000, a significant reduction.





One Year Left of the EU-Interreg Period – 15 Projects Apply

Fifteen partnerships have applied for EUR 16.8 million from the EU's Interreg Öresund-Kattegat-Skagerrak programme in the latest round. Since 2022, about EUR 137 million has been awarded to 105 projects aimed at solving shared societal problems across borders in southern Scandinavia. The programme is divided into four priority areas: Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Green Transition, Transport and Mobility, and Borderless Labour Market. Because of high demand, applications exceed the budget in two areas. The solution may be to transfer funds from the remaining areas.

First Time in 130 Years – No Danish Minister for Agriculture

The newly installed Danish government has made no room for a minister for agriculture, the first time in 130 years. Two thirds of Denmark's land area is agricultural. "The big question is whether Denmark is still an agricultural country," Peder Dam, chair of Landbohistorisk Selskab, told Danmarks Radio.

Nordic Countries Begin Defence Innovation Cooperation

At the start-up and innovation conference TechBBQ in Copenhagen, a letter of intent on cooperation in defence innovation was signed in August between Defence Tech Denmark, Defence Innovation Network Finland and Sweden's Amyna at Ideon Science Park in Lund. The cooperation is intended to lower barriers and create a more uniform Nordic market for small and medium-sized companies in the defence sector.



PHOTO: IDEON

Ideon Science Park CEO Anders G Nilsson with Temu Seppälä of Defence Innovation Network and Michael Lentge Andersen of Defence Tech Denmark.



Population Growth in Skåne Slows Further

Region Skåne's new population forecast shows that Skåne's population will grow more slowly than previously expected. To 2035, the population is projected to grow by a modest 0.3 per cent a year, equivalent to 49,000 people. That is still higher than the national average of 0.15 per cent a year. At the same time, the number of residents over 85 will rise sharply. In contrast to last year's forecast, "only" ten Skåne municipalities are expected to shrink over the next ten years.

15,000

More Travellers Choose Kastrup

In 2022, Swedavia's airports had a total of 5.5 million more passengers than Copenhagen Airport. Last year the gap had narrowed to just under 900,000 passengers, and in the first seven months of this year the Danish airport had almost 15,000 more passengers.

Denmark: Age Limit of 15 for Social Media

Children under 15 in Denmark are to be banned from using social media. This was decided last year by the former SVM government. The decision was made together with Konservative and Radikale Venstre, on the grounds that children and young people are exposed to sexually offensive and violent content. The government is investing DKK 160 million, to be distributed across 14 initiatives. Sweden has decided to appoint an inquiry into whether an age limit should be introduced.

Tesla Strike Ends

A conflict lasting almost three years between the electric car maker Tesla and its unionised employees in Sweden ended in August, when the trade union IF Metall called off its members' strike against Tesla. The company instead negotiated individual severance agreements with the former employees. In a press release, IF Metall said the course of events was "unprecedented on the Swedish labour market" and described the members as "striking angels". The striking members have expressed disappointment at IF Metall's handling of strike pay and unclear plans for the strike's future.



PHOTO: SUND & BÆLT

Third Tunnel Element of the Fehmarn Belt Link Immersed

The first three of a total of 89 tunnel elements for the Fehmarn Belt link have been lowered to the seabed off Rødbyhavn. The third element has been named Heiligenhafen. The tunnel, one of Europe's largest infrastructure projects, will at 18 kilometres be the longest immersed tunnel in the world. Because the specialist vessels Ivy 1 and 2, needed to install the tunnel, were delivered two years late, a timetable will be in place only after the sixth element is completed.



YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMUTING

Students Rarely Choose the Neighbouring Country for a Term Abroad

Few students choose to spend their exchange term on the other side of the Øresund. Instead, it is access to programmes that do not exist at home, or are harder to get into, that draws students across the border. That is one of several conclusions from Øresundsinstituttet's in-depth research within the EU-Interreg project Cross-Border Commuting across Øresund with Young People in Focus.

1 Universities Are Sparing with Marketing

Universities' marketing to students on the other side of the Øresund is currently almost non-existent. The resources available are instead aimed at students from outside the EU/EEA. Part of the explanation is that Danish politicians want to keep down the number of EU students, as they are entitled to state study grants (SU). Another is that application pressure is high anyway.

Own Network Important

Information about study opportunities in the neighbouring country mostly comes through personal networks: siblings, friends or acquaintances.

2 CBS Attracts Swedes

Nearly 1,000 Swedes study at Copenhagen Business School (CBS), and the number has risen steadily. One explanation is that its Swedish counterpart, the Stockholm School of Economics, offers far fewer places and is therefore harder to get into. But the city itself is also a draw.



"Copenhagen has an incredible number of interesting international companies and is close to the Continent," says CBS student Alice Behrens.

3 Danes Seek Stand-Alone Courses in Sweden

Many Danes who apply to Sweden do so to take stand-alone courses, a system that does not exist in Denmark. The humanities and social sciences are especially popular among Danes.

Cuts Drive Danes Across the Øresund

Since 2013, Denmark has gradually reduced the number of places on courses in the humanities and social sciences, in favour of programmes with a clearer link to the labour market. As a result, Danes are looking to Sweden – 66 per cent of Danish students on programmes in Sweden are studying the humanities or social sciences.



974 Swedes studied at Copenhagen Business School (CBS) in 2025. The number has risen by 63 per cent since 2014, with the big increase coming in the past three years. No other Danish university comes close to as many Swedish students.

He Is Supplementing His Danish Nursing Degree with Social Anthropology in Sweden

The programmes Markus Jensen wanted to study did not exist in Denmark, so he applied to Lund. The Swedish system of single courses also gave him something he could not have got at home: the chance to build on his Danish nursing degree without starting from scratch.

Markus Jensen's interest in, and pull towards, a life in Sweden began in his late teens.

"When I was 19 I visited Stockholm for the first time and liked it very much. So when I got home from that trip I started learning Swedish and preparing to be able to work there one day," he says.

He learned Swedish, worked in Stockholm and then returned to Denmark. He already had a nursing qualification, and when it was time to study further the choice was easy. The humanities subjects he applied for were not available in Denmark or felt outdated, and many master's programmes in the humanities and social sciences had been cut. Gender studies, one of the subjects he considered, can barely be studied in Denmark, he says.

"In Sweden there is much more education geared towards human rights, and it feels more holistic.


Markus Jensen.

Here these subjects are taken more seriously and people see more potential in them," he says.

For Markus Jensen, the link to his nursing degree was central. He wanted to work on health for minorities and on inequality in healthcare, but felt his Danish education had not equipped him for it. Social anthropology in Sweden was a way to add the knowledge he lacked to work on those issues in healthcare.

Read the full interview with Markus Jensen on pages 74–75 of the report Ungas pendling över Öresund.

Important Lessons from Companies with Cross-Border Commuters

Øresund companies with employees who commute across the border have gained important and unique experience of recruiting across the border. Some also mention challenges, such as bureaucracy in the hiring process and the need for more information. The new Danish certification scheme and SAS's major investment are examples of measures that could change cross-border commuting. On 6 November, companies are invited to the project's first networking meeting, which aims to create new knowledge about their needs and experience.

1 Swedish HR Staff Important When Recruiting to Denmark

Swedish shop managers in Denmark readily hire Swedes, even those who do not understand Danish at first. This emerges from interviews with recruitment managers at the Field's shopping centre in Ørestad. At the Emporia shopping centre in Malmö, it is mainly the Danish companies that attract Danish staff.

1 in 10 Commutes at Netcompany

At the IT company Netcompany's head office in Copenhagen, 2,500 people work, of whom 250 are cross-border commuters. The explanation: one of the company's co-founders is Swedish and has actively recruited staff from Lund University's faculty of engineering.

2 Administration Can Take Time

Mats Bengtsson is shop manager at H&M in Field's in Ørestad. Hiring Swedes takes longer and requires more planning, he says.

"It was smoother when I started working. Then you went out to the tax agency Skat, got your CPR number, then went to the bank and got an account number. Now it takes much longer."

Fewer Swedes at Field's

Several of the shops that Øresundsinstituttet visited at Field's have employees who commute from Sweden, but several say the number has fallen. Unpredictable train services and the rising cost of commuting are named as possible causes, as is the fact that job adverts are in Danish, in Danish channels.



3 The Airport a Gateway to the Danish Labour Market

International staff, including Swedish cross-border commuters, who have worked at Copenhagen Airport are more likely to continue their careers in Denmark. One reason is that the mental barrier to seeking jobs further inland shrinks, according to the manager of the Profil Optik shop at Field's.

3,000 Commuters to Copenhagen Airport

Copenhagen Airport is by far the largest workplace for commuters in the region, with almost 3,000 employees living in Sweden. In the coming six months the airport will be a focus of Øresundsinstituttet's work on the EU-Interreg project Cross-Border Commuting across Øresund with Young People in Focus.

4 Understanding Commuters – a Competitive Advantage

Employers who understand the challenges of cross-border commuting become more attractive. Bella Group, for example, offers Swedish staff overnight accommodation when the Øresund Bridge is closed. Ferring has arranged bus transport when border controls made commuting harder. Netcompany let its Swedish staff appoint representatives who, during the coronavirus pandemic, informed the company of their needs.

Rail-Adjacent Location Matters

Workplaces close to Øresund train stations or metro stations were in focus during the half-year. Earlier analyses by Øresundsinstituttet have shown that proximity to infrastructure matters for cross-border commuting.



5 Swedish Labour Passes Danish Companies By

In a long-running cooperation with the City of Malmö, Copenhagen Business Hub (Københavns Erhvervshus) has tried to match Swedish jobseekers with Danish companies, with mixed success. Mads Elling, chief consultant at Københavns Erhvervshus, says Danish companies are not sufficiently aware of the opportunity to recruit from Sweden.



6 Authorities Lack Information

The City of Malmö's labour market department works to market the Danish labour market to jobseekers, but Ung Malmö asks for more knowledge of the opportunities so that it can inform the young people it helps who are interested in working or studying in Denmark.

New Law Could Open the Door to Denmark

Many participants in Ung Malmö lack Swedish citizenship and have therefore found it hard to seek work in Denmark. In early September the Danish Parliament adopted a new certification scheme allowing Danish companies to hire people without EU/EEA citizenship from 16 specific countries, which could potentially open the door to Denmark for some of the participants. An income requirement remains, however: at least DKK 322,000 a year in 2026, just over DKK 27,000 a month.

7 Northern Øresund – a Forgotten Opportunity

The focus is often on commuting in the southern part of the Øresund, between Malmö and Copenhagen. Helsingborg, where unemployment is high, wants to change that. Together with Elsinore Municipality, it is organising, among other things, a Danish-Swedish job fair, and the two municipalities have also initiated the EU-Interreg project "Arbete över Öresund" (Work across Øresund).

The Labour Market across the Øresund in Focus

How can recruiting and retaining staff across the Øresund be made easier? At this year's Border Obstacles Conference, SAS, Copenhagen Malmö Port and Netcompany shared their experience. Among other things, personal relationships and internal guidance are important tools.

The airline SAS, the port operator Copenhagen Malmö Port and the IT company Netcompany all have many Øresund commuters on their payrolls. That is why representatives from each were invited onto the stage at Kosmopol in Copenhagen to share their experience of recruiting across the border. They did so in a panel discussion at the annual Border Obstacles Conference, held this year on 24 September. The conference was organised by the information service Øresunddirekt and Øresundsinstituttet, with support from the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Personal Contacts Attract Young People to SAS

At SAS, communications specialist Rojda Becirovic says younger employees living in Sweden are at first worried about having to work on the Danish side of the Øresund.

"But it is actually easier than they thought."

According to Becirovic, many young people apply for airport jobs after talking to acquaintances who already work there. That gives many a sense of security as they go through the recruitment process, which can be long.

"Sometimes Swedish jobseekers cannot find all the answers themselves about what they need to do during the recruitment process. That is why personal relationships mean so much," she says.

Getting a job at the airport requires a clean criminal record, and obtaining proof of that can take much longer for someone living in Sweden than in Denmark, which is "a particularly big challenge", says Becirovic.

Internal Information Service Set Up

When the coronavirus pandemic hit the region and travel across the Øresund Bridge was for a time difficult, it affected Netcompany internally. Many uncertainties arose for employees commuting from Sweden, according to Gustaf Löfberg, Chief Delivery Officer at the IT company.

"Then I discovered that people had started talking among themselves about how it had become difficult to get to Copenhagen."

He and 10–15 other employees decided to form a group to capture the challenges of cross-border commuting and draw up a list of guidance. It still exists and is being developed further to make things easier for new employees who commute across the Øresund.

Both Danish and Swedish Used

At Copenhagen Malmö Port (CMP), Danish and Swedish are an integral part of how the company communicates internally. CMP has, for example, a digital intranet for staff in both languages. The decision to use both languages internally was taken when the company was formed, says Ulrika Prytz Rugfelt, Chief Communications & Sustainability Officer at CMP.

"If you are to cooperate across the border, both Danish and Swedish must be used," she says.



Representatives of companies with Øresund commuters in a panel discussion.



Paméla Jönsson-Blais, coordinator at the Swedish Social Insurance Agency/ Øresunddirekt, spoke about the area of social insurance.

Interreg Project Gathers Pace for All Partners

The three-year EU-Interreg project Cross-Border Commuting across Øresund with Young People in Focus has now been under way for just over a year and has already produced results for all partners: Øresunddirekt Sverige/the Skåne County Administrative Board, Øresunddirekt Danmark/Greater Copenhagen, Region Skåne, Roskilde University, Lund University and Øresundsinstituttet.

Large Survey of Young People Completed

The results of a large survey carried out and analysed by Lund University (LU) and Roskilde University (RUC) are ready for publication. This will happen at the project's first networking meeting for companies with cross-border commuters, which Øresundsinstituttet is organising at Copenhagen Airport on 6 November. The media researchers Jesper Falkheimer of LU and Mark Ørsten, Mads Kæmsgaard Eberholst and Aske Kammer of RUC asked around 2,000 young people living in either eastern Denmark or Skåne about, among other things, their attitude to cross-border commuting.

Øresunddirekt Reaches Thousands of Young People

An important part of the project is to reach young people directly, and people who work with them. Øresunddirekt Sverige has informed a total of 3,195 people on 50 occasions during the period. Of these, 3,125 were young people aged 18 to 29, while 70 were professionals working with young people. The information was delivered through presentations to 731 young people, at fairs to 1,434 young people and via information tables to a further 960.

Øresunddirekt Danmark's social media have also helped extend the project's reach. During the period, the project's social media accounts gained 1,457 new followers. The 44 posts published reached 371,500 unique people and generated a total of 587,800 views. Taken together, the activities in the first six months of the year show broad efforts to raise awareness of the opportunities in the Øresund region, gather new knowledge about young people's attitudes and strengthen contacts between young people, working life, educational institutions and other players on both sides of the Øresund.



On 9 September 2026, Øresundsinstituttet published the first major report gathering the results of all project partners.

Five Unique Networks Take Shape

Øresundsinstituttet is responsible for building three of the project's networks, and development has gone somewhat better than expected so far:

- **4 organisations** take part in **the authorities' network**, which covers Danish and Swedish municipal units for the labour market, staff recruitment and young people.
- **13 organisations are in the civil society network**, with associations ranging from football to culture and social initiatives.
- **33 companies are in the business network** for those who have or want to have Øresund commuters on their staff. A first meeting for knowledge exchange is planned at Copenhagen Airport on 6 November.

Øresunddirekt in Sweden and Denmark are responsible for building networks for young people and recipient organisations.

- **238 young people** are in Øresunddirekt Danmark's **youth network**.
- **48 organisations** are in Øresunddirekt's **recipient network**.

THE ØRESUND REGION IN FIGURES

Integration in the Øresund region continues to develop, with growing travel, increased cross-border commuting and more and more Danish tourists in Skåne. At the same time, migration flows across the Øresund remain steady, and the number of Danish-owned holiday homes in Skåne continues to fall.

Freight Trains across the Øresund Bridge Broke the Negative Trend

3,552 freight wagons and lorries crossed the Øresund by bridge or ferry every day in the first half of 2026, up 6.8 per cent on the same period in 2025. Lorry traffic on the Helsingborg–Elsinore ferry accounted for the biggest increase. Freight train traffic on the Øresund Bridge also broke the trend, rising by 4.7 per cent. Lorry traffic across the bridge was also at a record high.

Cross-Border Commuting Keeps Breaking Records

23,748 people commuted across the Øresund in the second quarter of 2026, up 6 per cent on the same period in 2025. In total, 21,908 people commuted across the Øresund in 2024, the latest year with full-year statistics.

New Peak for Swedish-Born People Living in Eastern Denmark

31,036 Danish- and Swedish-born people lived in the neighbouring country in 2025. The number of Swedish-born residents in eastern Denmark set a record at 11,731, up 21 per cent since 2015. In 2025, the number of Danish-born residents in Skåne (19,305) fell by one per cent on the year before. Since 2015 it has fallen by nine per cent.

Minimal Increase in Moves across the Øresund

3,603 people moved across the Øresund in 2025, a total of 13 more moves than the year before. Since 2015 the number has risen by ten per cent. The increase is mainly down to moves from eastern Denmark to Skåne, which have risen by 22 per cent over the period.

Passenger Journeys across the Øresund Higher than Ever

107,331 passenger journeys were made by bridge and ferry across the Øresund every day in the first half of 2026, a new record. That is up 3.5 per cent on the same period in 2025. Train journeys across the Øresund Bridge are rising the most, by 7.1 per cent.

The Trend of More Swedish Students in Denmark Continues

1,764 Danish and Swedish students studied in the neighbouring country in 2025. In the past two years the number of Swedish students in Denmark has risen again after a steady decline since 2015. It is now 1,021 Swedes studying in the neighbouring country. The 743 Danes studying in Sweden is largely unchanged from 2024.

Fewer Danish-Owned Holiday Homes in Skåne

2,228 Danish-owned holiday homes were in Skåne in 2025, down 1.4 per cent on 2024. The trend towards fewer Danish-owned holiday homes in Skåne continues.

Record Number of Danish Tourists in Skåne

461,577 Danish overnight stays were registered in Skåne in 2025, the highest number since 2015 and more than double the figure ten years ago. The number of Swedish overnight stays in eastern Denmark has fallen by 10 per cent since 2015. There are still more Swedish overnight stays in eastern Denmark (851,346) than the reverse.

More Swedish-Owned Companies in Denmark, Fewer Danish-Owned in Sweden

1,980 Swedish-owned companies were in eastern Denmark in 2024, the latest full year for which statistics are available. That is up 46 per cent since 2015. On the Swedish side of the Øresund there were 365 Danish companies in 2023, the latest statistical year from Tillväxtanalys, down nine per cent on 2022.

Analyses from Øresundsinstituttet

Every year Øresundsinstituttet produces analyses covering the different aspects of life and cooperation in the Øresund region. This year's reports range from local perspectives on Scanian economic trends to how integration across the Øresund is developing. Some of the reports are produced in cooperation with partners such as Sparbanken Skåne and Øresundsbron, while others are produced independently.



Climate, Preparedness and Demography in Skåne and the Øresund

Skåne's greenhouse gas emissions rose by more than the national average in 2024, largely as a result of the lowered emissions reduction obligation. Skåne has thus gone from being the part of the Øresund region with the lowest emissions to the highest. This is shown by this year's edition of Vår framtid, which Øresundsinstituttet produces on behalf of Sparbanken Skåne. Vår framtid is published once a year and takes the temperature of the climate transition in Skåne and the Øresund region. This year's report has a broader focus. Among other things, it contains a survey of preparedness work in the county. The report also addresses the demographic challenges that follow as the big cities grow, while ten Scanian municipalities are heading for a falling population over the coming decade.

Traffic across the Øresund

The first half of 2026 brought new records for passenger and commuter journeys by car, train and ferry across the Øresund. On average, 107,331 passenger journeys were made per day. Øresund trains continue to see strong growth in the number of people crossing the bridge, up 7.1 per cent. Freight traffic has turned from decline to growth, and lorries and vans on the Øresund Bridge set a new record. This is shown by the report Øresundsindex trafikstatistik, produced by Øresundsinstituttet on behalf of Øresundsbro Konsortiet. The report shows developments in the number of commuter journeys, passenger journeys, passenger cars crossing the Øresund and freight traffic across the Øresund in the first half of 2026.

Read the full report here.





Young People's Commuting across the Øresund

This spring Øresundsinstituttet produced a report as part of the EU-Interreg project Cross-Border Commuting across Øresund with Young People in Focus. The work is based on research and some 80 interviews on practical lessons in the area from companies, universities, municipalities, civil society organisations and young people. One of the report's conclusions is that Danish and Swedish students often cross the Øresund to gain access to something they do not have in their home country, either because of high admission requirements or a different range of programmes. Another is that preliminary results show that Swedish staff at Danish companies make recruitment from Sweden easier, and vice versa. Respondents also say the bureaucratic process for hiring Swedes takes longer than it did a couple of years ago. Click here to read the report.

Danish and Swedish Defence and Preparedness 2026

A new area of cooperation between Sweden and Denmark has emerged in recent years, driven by the unstable geopolitical situation and Sweden's NATO membership: defence and security. In April this year Øresundsinstituttet published the analysis Försvar och beredskap, which examines structures, decisions and developments in defence, preparedness and civil defence in the two countries. The report finds that Sweden and Denmark have very different defence and preparedness structures. This creates challenges for cross-border cooperation between authorities. Cooperation is nevertheless growing, and the Skåne County Administrative Board is now planning a first meeting in November with Danish preparedness authorities.



More Facts Available on Øresundsinstituttet's Website

To read more about the various parameters underlying Øresundsinstituttet's analyses, more information is available on the institute's website. Under the "facts" tab there is general information about the Øresund region, including patterns of migration across the Øresund and how many inhabitants the region has, as well as information about the 14 universities in the Øresund region and their students. You can also read more about commuting, traffic and cooperation across the Øresund.

ØRESUNDSINSTITUTTET

Danish-Swedish Networking Meetings and Special Trips

In recent years Øresundsinstituttet has stepped up its work to create contacts across the Øresund by organising conferences, Danish-Swedish networking meetings and special trips between the countries. Today Øresundsinstituttet is the body that organises the most cross-border meetings. Examples include the annual Real Estate Øresund conference, the Denmark-Sweden Summit at TechBBQ, and bus trips to the Fehmarn Belt tunnel construction site and to Folkemødet on Bornholm. Several of the activities are carried out in cooperation with other organisations.



Bus Trip: Malmö to Folkemødet on Bornholm
Øresundsinstituttet organised a bus trip from Malmö to the democracy festival Folkemødet on Bornholm, Denmark's equivalent of Sweden's Almedalen Week. The aim was to get more Swedes to take part in Folkemødet.



Start-Up and Innovation Conference TechBBQ
Øresundsinstituttet was invited this summer to host the Denmark-Sweden Summit at TechBBQ in Bella Center in Copenhagen. The event provided a setting for meetings, panel discussions and networking within Danish-Swedish exchange.



REØ Round Table at Laksegadekvarteret
Øresundsinstituttet invited guests on a tour of the construction project at Laksegadekvarteret in Copenhagen, formerly Danske Bank. Guests also heard a talk on the expansion of the metro.



Real Estate Øresund Sold Out
Øresundsinstituttet organised Real Estate Øresund, with 320 participants. This year's Danish-Swedish event for built-environment professionals was held at Malmö Börshus on 3 February.



The Øresund Conference One Market in Nordhavn
The conference focuses on small and medium-sized companies doing business between Denmark and Sweden. It was started in 2024 by Niels Buchholst Invest in cooperation with, among others, Nyföretagarcentrum Öresund under the name Nordic Scale up. From 2026 the conference is organised by Øresundsinstituttet.

Danish-Swedish Networking Meetings Organised by Øresundsinstituttet in 2026

3 February	**Real Estate Øresund,** a full-day conference at Malmö Börshus. The event was sold out, with 320 participants.
5 March	**REØ Round Table** at Saab in Lund. Meeting on how new preparedness requirements affect future urban planning.
4 April	**Post-election meeting in Malmö** after the Danish Parliament election, in cooperation with Malmö University and Greater Copenhagen.
15 April	**Bus trip to Rødbyhavn** and study visit to the Fehmarn Belt tunnel construction site for Fastighetsägarna Syd.
2 June	**Economic outlook day in Helsingborg** in cooperation with Handelsföreningen and the City of Helsingborg.
12 June	**Bus trip from Malmö to Folkemødet** on Bornholm, Denmark's equivalent of Almedalen Week.
27 August	**Denmark-Sweden Summit** at TechBBQ at Bella Center in Copenhagen.
8 September	**REØ Round Table** study visit to the Laksegadekvarteret construction project in Copenhagen.
24 September	**Border Obstacles Conference in Copenhagen** in cooperation with Øresunddirekt and with support from the Nordic Council of Ministers.
30 September in	**Post-election meeting in Copenhagen** after the Swedish Parliament election, cooperation with Greater Copenhagen and Altinget.
8 October	**Danish-Swedish networking meeting** at the Swedish ambassador's residence.
5 November	**Øresund Conference One Market** in Nordhavn in Copenhagen.
6 November	**Networking meeting** at Copenhagen Airport in Kastrup for companies with Øresund commuters.
12 November	**Danish-Swedish networking meeting** at the Danish Embassy in Stockholm.

Part II

IN DEPTH

- Changes of Government After Election Years in Both Sweden and Denmark
- Leftward Shift in Both Countries, but the Social Democrats Lose Ground
- Nordic Cooperation Highlighted in the Danish Government Declaration







NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN TWO COUNTRIES

Geopolitics Steps Up Danish-Swedish Cooperation

It has been a super election year in the Øresund region, with parliamentary elections in both Sweden and Denmark. Sweden also held municipal and regional elections, while Denmark held its municipal and regional elections last autumn. The new geopolitical reality, with Russia's war in Ukraine and an unpredictable USA, has opened a window for closer Nordic cooperation, which is now written into the Danish government declaration.

Mild left-wing winds are blowing in the Nordic countries.

In Denmark, voters rejected the cross-bloc SVM government in favour of the fringes. Although Socialdemokratiet lost ground, Mette Frederiksen was able to stitch together a centre-left government with the seats of the centrist Moderaterne. On Friday 9 October the "Four-Leaf Clover Government" presents its first budget proposal.

In Sweden, the red-green side won a narrow Parliament majority but has yet to find a stable government. That requires the seats of both Vänsterpartiet and Centerpartiet, and so far no opening is in sight.

Stronger Left-Wing Winds Locally

In both Danish and Swedish cities the left-wing winds have strengthened. Last autumn Sisse Marie Welling's Socialistisk Folkeparti ended more than 100 years of Social Democratic rule at Copenhagen City Hall. A broad political agreement from right to left made her lord mayor of the Danish capital. The centre-right parties preferred Welling as lord mayor to Line Barfod of Enhedslisten, which otherwise became the municipality's largest party.

In Malmö, a new red-green administration of Socialdemokraterna, Vänsterpartiet and Miljöpartiet was confirmed at the end of September. Vänsterpartiet, which won two seats, replaced the previous coalition partner Liberalerna, which lost one. This means Katrin Stjernfeldt Jammeh (S) can continue as mayor.

Many New Faces in Greater Copenhagen

The Swedish side of the Øresund stands for continuity in Greater Copenhagen cooperation. Besides Katrin Stjernfeldt Jammeh, Anders Almgren in Lund and Christian Orsing in Helsingborg stay on, and at regional level chair Carl Johan Sonesson secures a majority in Region Skåne.

On the Danish side, Sisse Marie Welling is newly elected to the organisation, while Lars Gaardhøj stays on, but from next year in the new Region Østdanmark.

In Denmark, the new minister responsible for Nordic cooperation is Monika Rubin of Moderaterne. She takes over the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Nordic cooperation portfolio moves there from the Ministry of Church, Urban and Rural Affairs, where it was previously held by Morten Dahlin of Venstre. An interview with Monika Rubin is on page 62.

The Danish government declaration of 2 June shows an increased focus on the Nordic dimension. It now says Nordic cooperation is to be revived because of the new geopolitical reality, with Russia's war in Ukraine and an unpredictable USA that threatens the Unity of the Realm (Rigsfællesskabet) through its desire to take over Greenland. Military cooperation, made easier by Sweden's NATO membership, paves the way for more cooperation in other areas, such as green energy, future technology and a joint "growth alliance". This contrasts with the previous declaration, from 2022, when the Nordic countries were mentioned more in passing. Sweden's and Finland's accession to NATO strengthened the importance of both the Nordic and Baltic Sea regions.

When Sweden's ambassador Hans Wallmark spoke alongside his Danish counterpart Jens Kisling at the Real Estate Øresund conference earlier this year, he made the same point.

"The window is now open for closer cooperation," he said, referring to the Greenland crisis.

How the new Swedish government views the cooperation is still unclear. But it is clear that Nordic cohesion is becoming more important in an unsettled world. In a communication to the Swedish Parliament in March, the Tidö government set out how it saw Nordic cooperation last year: when others "try to split Europe from within and without, Sweden and the Nordic countries should be a strengthening and unifying force".

Economy Matters in Both Elections

Despite heavy election losses and historically poor results for the Social Democrats in both Sweden and Denmark, both countries look set to get governments that lean left and reach across the centre. Although the political agendas differ somewhat, there are many similarities in turnout and in how men and women vote. But while the compromises that shaped the Danish government are praised, the Swedish parties warn of broken promises to voters if new agreements emerge and red lines are renegotiated.

Bloc Politics Loosening Up?

With many parties in both Sweden and Denmark, cooperation has been the rule rather than the exception. The Swedish right, which has traditionally comprised Moderaterna, Centerpartiet, Kristdemokraterna and Liberalerna, has on several occasions formed joint coalition governments, while Socialdemokraterna, as the largest party on the left, has more often governed alone. In Denmark coalitions have been more common, on both right and left. In the previous term Denmark also had a genuine centre government spanning the traditional bloc boundaries.



Cooperation across the Swedish centre looks more possible than before, now that Centerpartiet has named Socialdemokraterna leader Magdalena Andersson as its candidate for prime minister. Centerpartiet leader Elisabeth Thand Ringqvist said before the election that she was inspired by Løkke Rasmussen and his centre alternative. What such a constellation would look like in Sweden is still unclear, as many red lines remain.

Should the knots be untied, it would not be the first time Sweden has looked to Denmark for inspiration. Sweden has previously followed Denmark in opening up to cooperation with Sverigedemokraterna, as Denmark did with Dansk Folkeparti, even though it had long been seen as unthinkable.

Liberal Tailwind in Denmark

Ahead of this year's Parliament election most people had written off Liberalerna. Since the 2022 election, when the party won 4.6 per cent, it has struggled. Several polls, including from Novus/TV4 and SVT/Verian, showed support well below the threshold throughout the past term. But the party caught a tailwind just before election day and took 5.3 per cent of the vote.

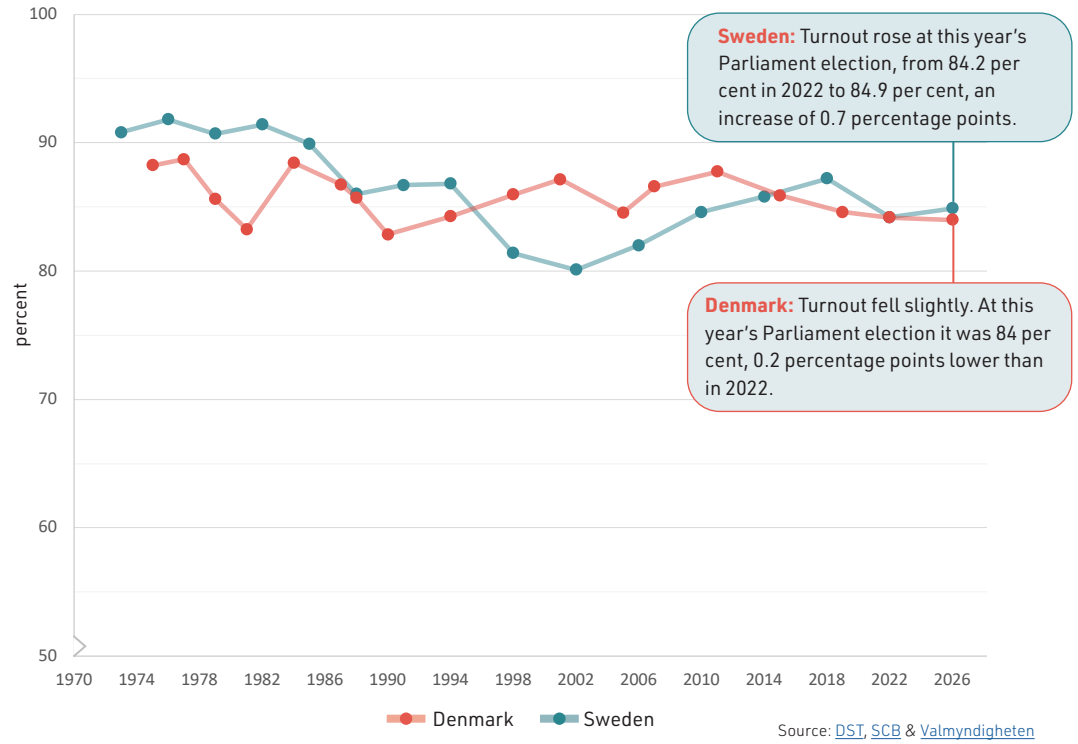
The Danish liberal party Liberal Alliance, by contrast, looks to be on the rise. In the Danish Parliament election it won 9.4 per cent.

Support among young voters is striking. Among 18–24-year-olds, Liberal Alliance is by far the largest party. Among young Swedish voters the picture is considerably bleaker for Liberalerna, which did very badly among the youngest according to SVT's exit poll, winning two per cent.

High Turnout – but Moving in Different Directions

Turnout in Sweden and Denmark is high by global standards, but this year it moved in different directions. Of just over 4.3 million eligible Danes, 84 per cent voted in this year's Parliament election, down 0.2 percentage points on 2022. In Sweden almost 85 per cent of the 8 million eligible voters went to the polls, up 0.7 percentage points. The difference reflects a longer trend: while Swedish turnout has risen slightly since 2006, with the exception of 2022, Denmark has seen falling turnout since 2011. Read more on page 47.

TURNOUT IN SWEDEN AND DENMARK



Source: DST, SCB & Valmyndigheten

More First-Time Voters in Sweden

Nearly half a million people were able to vote in a Parliament election for the first time this year. The group made up 6.5 per cent of all eligible voters, compared with 5.7 per cent in 2022. In Denmark the share of first-time voters in this year's Parliament election was slightly lower at 5.2 per cent, roughly the same as in 2022 (5.3 per cent). In both countries first-time voters are mainly young people who have turned 18 since the last election, while a smaller share are people who have become citizens.

The Social Democrats Lose Ground Among Young Danish Voters

The Social Democrats in both Sweden and Denmark had historically poor elections, but the pattern among young voters differs between the two countries. Among the youngest Danish voters (18–24), Socialdemokratiet is now only the sixth-largest party. Instead Liberal Alliance, Radikale Venstre and the left-wing Enhedslisten and Socialistisk Folkeparti do best.

In Sweden, Socialdemokraterna is the second-largest party among the very youngest voters (18–21), according to figures from Valu.[1] But with 20 per cent of the vote it has far less support among the young than Moderaterna, which takes 30 per cent of the group's votes and so becomes the largest party. Notably, support for Sverigedemokraterna in this group has fallen markedly, by 7 percentage points on the last election. Among the slightly older group (22–30), Socialdemokraterna is instead the largest party with 23 per cent. Next comes Moderaterna with 22 per cent, two percentage points lower than in 2022, followed by Sverigedemokraterna, down one percentage point to 17 per cent.

For Denmark, the political scientist Kasper Møller Hansen predicts that young people's changed party preferences could have major consequences for the make-up of the Danish Parliament within 30 years: "The older voters are the last bastion, and the generations now coming, both the very youngest and the next youngest, are not very Social Democratic," he says. His guess is a future Parliament that is more polarised than today, with a stronger left and right but a weaker centre. With an electoral

1 Valu is an exit poll weighted against the final election result. The figures are therefore representative of how a group voted overall, but do not necessarily reflect the exact numbers.



threshold twice as high as Denmark's, similar fragmentation is less likely in Sweden.

Voters' Most Important Issues

According to SVT's exit poll Valu, four issues were named by almost half of voters as the most important for their choice of party: healthcare, schools and education, the economy, and law and order. Compared with 2022, the economy has climbed up the list. The category refugees/immigration, which has taken up a lot of space in recent campaigns, came only ninth among voters' priorities.

In Denmark, the economy, climate and foreign and defence policy topped voters' list of the most important issues two weeks before the election, according to a Megafon poll.

Climate issues did not get anywhere near the same traction in the Swedish election debate as in the Danish one, where pig farming and water quality took up a lot of space. The American president's remarks about Greenland pushed security policy high up the agenda in Denmark. In Sweden, bombings and shootings linked to gang crime helped make law and order a major issue, while it had no comparable importance in Denmark.

Clear Gender Polarisation in Both Countries

Differences in how women and men vote are marked in both Sweden and Denmark. In Sweden this year's election set a "Swedish record in gender polarisation", according to Jakob Ahlbom, doctoral student in political science at Stockholm University, and Henrik Ekengren Oscarsson, professor of political science at the University of Gothenburg. According to Valu, Socialdemokraterna was clearly the largest party among women, with 33 per cent of the vote, 15 percentage points ahead of second-placed Moderaterna. Among men Socialdemokraterna was also largest (23 per cent), but by a narrow margin over Sverigedemokraterna (22 per cent) and Moderaterna (21 per cent). Had only women decided, the red-green side would have won clearly; had only men decided, the Tidö parties would have kept power.

The same pattern recurs in Denmark, where the traditionally left-leaning parties are stronger among women than among men. The difference is clearest for SF: 13 per cent of women voted for the party, against 7 per cent of men. The reverse applies to Liberal Alliance, which won 11 per cent of men's votes but only 5 per cent of women's.

There is no clear answer to what lies behind the growing political gulf between the sexes. Historically the explanation has often been that women are over-represented in welfare professions and therefore vote for a stronger public sector. But according to Ahlbom and Ekengren Oscarsson, more recent research shows that "the gender differences extend far beyond welfare issues". They point out, among other things, that women tend to be more progressive on issues such as the environment, migration and equality, differences that are often larger among the younger age groups. Women also generally have higher levels of education than men, which tends to "spill over" into other areas of life, such as career choice, which in turn affects political interests. Social media is also highlighted as a partial explanation, as an "amplifying mechanism, a catalyst of initially small differences", where voters encounter different political realities depending on their initial interests.

How Denmark's and Sweden's Elections Differ

The Swedish and Danish electoral systems are relatively similar. Both give parties seats in proportion to the number of votes they receive, and both have four-year terms. There are some differences, however, such as when elections are called and who leads the process towards a new prime minister after an election.

When Is the Election Held?

Sweden has fixed terms, with an election every four years. It makes no difference whether there has been an extra election in between: Parliament elections are still held on the second Sunday in September, four years after the last ordinary election.

In Denmark the prime minister calls a Parliament election within four years of the last one. The election is then usually held within three to four weeks.

One Election or Several?

In Sweden, ordinary elections to the Swedish Parliament, regional councils and municipal councils are always held on the same day.

Denmark has chosen to separate the elections. Municipal and regional elections are always held on the same day, the third Tuesday in November every four years.

Citizens Abroad?

Swedish citizens living abroad can vote in the Swedish Parliament election, but not in municipal and regional elections.

Danish citizens who are not registered as residents in Denmark cannot vote in any of the Danish elections.

Electoral Threshold?

For a party to enter the Swedish Parliament it needs four per cent of all votes, or twelve per cent in one constituency.

For a party to enter the Danish Parliament it needs two per cent of the vote. A party can also enter by winning a constituency seat in one of the 10 large constituencies.

Who Leads the Prime Ministerial Vote?

The Speaker of the Swedish Parliament asks one of the party leaders to explore the possibilities of forming a government. After each failed prime ministerial vote, the Speaker again asks a party leader to try to form a new government. After four failed votes, an extra election is called automatically.

In Denmark it is the monarch who appoints the party leader to lead attempts to form a government. After each failed attempt there is a new *kongerunde* (royal round). The number of *kongerunder* is not limited.

ELECTION IN DENMARK

Distribution of the Danish Parliament's (Folketinget) 179 Seats

The Support Parties

The government is supported by Enhedslisten and Alternativet.

Together they hold **16 seats**

The "Four-Leaf Clover Government"

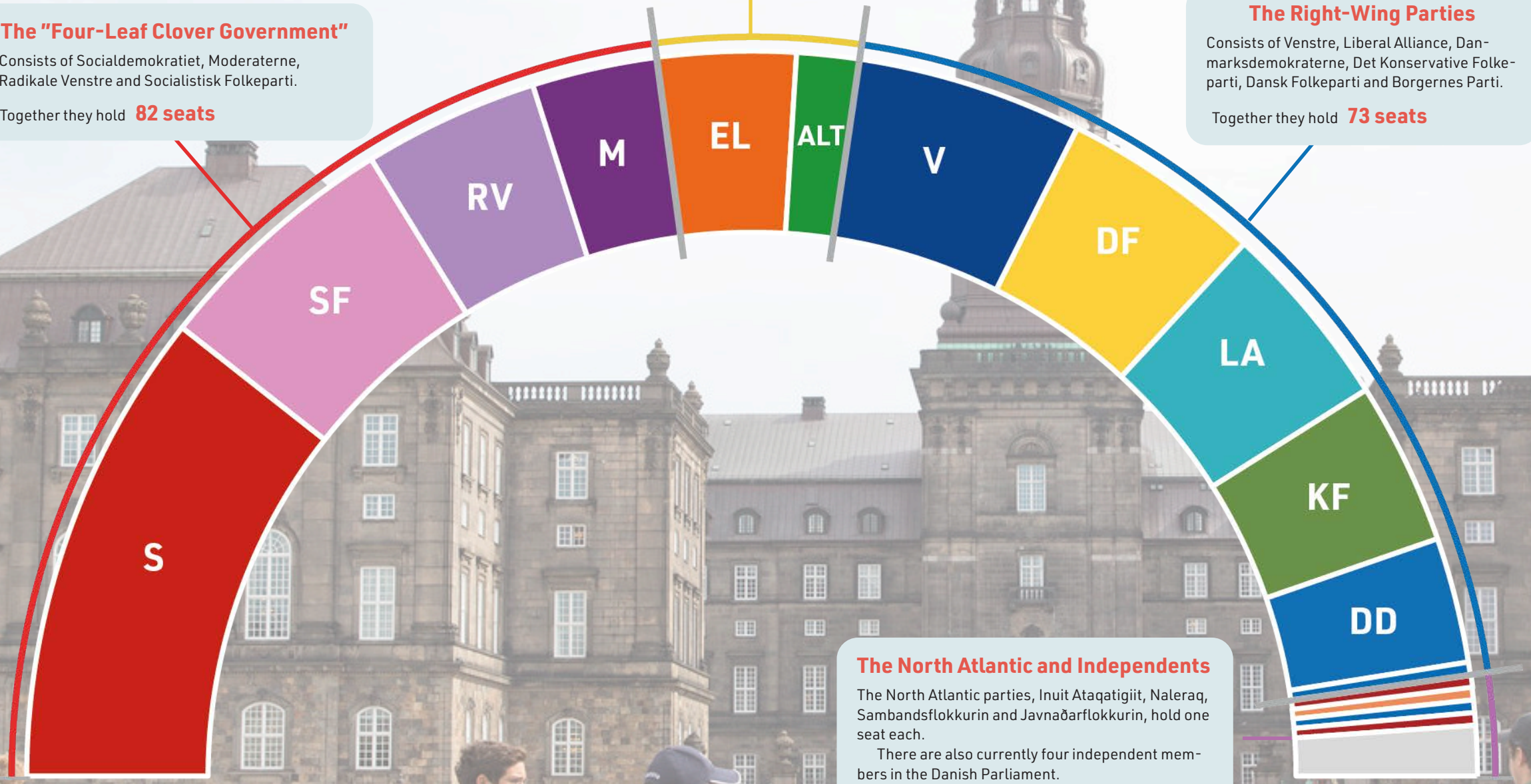
Consists of Socialdemokratiet, Moderaterne, Radikale Venstre and Socialistisk Folkeparti.

Together they hold **82 seats**

The Right-Wing Parties

Consists of Venstre, Liberal Alliance, Danmarksdemokraterne, Det Konservative Folkeparti, Dansk Folkeparti and Borgernes Parti.

Together they hold **73 seats**



The North Atlantic and Independents

The North Atlantic parties, Inuit Ataqatigiit, Naleraq, Sambandsflokkurin and Javnaðarflokkurin, hold one seat each.

There are also currently four independent members in the Danish Parliament.

Together they hold **8 seats**

IN DEPTH



PHOTO: HASSE FERROLD

From left: Martin Lidegaard (Radikale Venstre), Pia Olsen Dyhr (Socialistisk Folkeparti), Mette Frederiksen (Socialdemokratiet) and Lars Løkke Rasmussen (Moderaterne).

ELECTION IN DENMARK

Frederiksen's New Government Leans Further Left

When voters gave the cross-bloc SVM government the thumbs down, Mette Frederiksen leaned further to the left. Not so far that Enhedslisten got a place in government, where Moderaterne drew the line. The new centre-left government, or "Four-Leaf Clover Government", consists of Socialdemokratiet, Moderaterne, Radikale Venstre and Socialistisk Folkeparti. It is supported by the left-wing Enhedslisten and the green Alternativet.

In the Danish Parliament election on 24 March all the government parties lost ground. Socialdemokratiet had its worst election since 1903, the centrist Moderaterne lost two seats and the liberal Venstre only narrowly remained the largest centre-right party.

While Danes rejected their cross-bloc SVM government, neither the red nor the blue bloc won a majority of its own. Moderaterne remained the kingmaker.

Government formation took a record length of time. Only on 2 June could four party leaders present the platform for a centre-left coalition. At the head was Mette Frederiksen (S), who now leads her third government. She was flanked by Martin Lidegaard of the social-liberal Radikale Venstre, Pia Olsen Dyhr of the left-wing Socialistisk Folkeparti (SF) and Lars Løkke Rasmussen of the centrist Moderaterne.

The new government is a minority government with 82 of the necessary 90 seats. It will therefore have to rely on the support parties Enhedslisten and Alternativet for a majority. Together the two parties hold 16 seats.

Compromises with the Support Parties

Free dental visits, halved VAT on food (and abolished altogether on fruit and vegetables), free public transport for young people, more money for early-retirement pensioners, a ban on spraying vulnerable land and lower tax for companies and high earners. Those are the main points of the new government platform.

The platform is a compromise in which several parties have secured their pet issues, including the support parties. Enhedslisten, for example, pushed for free dental care and free public transport for young people, while Alternativet won green proposals such as improved animal welfare, limited pig production and a national food strategy. Socialdemokratiet secured a higher Arne pension (an early retirement scheme), while Moderaterne won lower corporation tax and a lower top tax rate, though the latter is not fully settled. The government also has the backing of the Greenlandic seats, having promised, among other things, several investments in Greenland's infrastructure.

Two big stumbling blocks that the government keeps kicking down the road concern migration and tax cuts. The support parties have opposed the cuts to the middle and top-top tax rates that the government wants to push through. Enhedslisten has said the government will have to look for support elsewhere. A tourist tax could become the government's way out. According to information given to the newspaper Børsen, the government will propose a tax of DKK 20 on overnight stays in Copenhagen and Aarhus, plus a charge on cruise ships. The aim is said to be to fund the tax cuts, including abolishing the top-top tax for high earners, raising the threshold for the middle tax and lowering corporation tax.

Nitrogen Law Provokes Farmers' Anger – and Rebellion in Venstre

The Danish Parliament has passed the fertiliser act (gødskningsloven), which regulates how much nitrogen different farms may emit, depending on how vulnerable the surrounding waters are. As compensation for farmers who will not be able to fertilise as much, the government has set aside DKK 1.2 billion. That did not placate all farmers, and on 1 September around 2,000 of them gathered for tractor demonstrations around the country.

The act, part of the Green Tripartite negotiated under the SVM government, caused a rebellion in the old farmers' party Venstre. Five of the party's 18 members voted against the proposal.

The party has been plagued by splits in recent years, both when Lars Løkke Rasmussen broke away and formed Moderaterne and when former minister for immigration and integration Inger Støjberg formed Danmarksdemokraterne.

An Epinion poll from September shows the crisis clearly. The party has the support of only 7.1 per cent of the population, lower than the other blue parties.

Another big dispute in agriculture is the decision on a national spraying ban, to be introduced before the end of the year. Danish pig production is also to be thoroughly reorganised. "Extreme breeding" of pigs is to be banned, and a cooperation between farmers and several organisations will form a four-party group to crack the issue.

Red Lines Complicated the Negotiations

During the campaign the SVM government itself became an election issue. Both Socialdemokratiet and Venstre made clear that the former cross-bloc government had played out its role. Moderaterne wanted a similar but expanded government across the centre. Together the three former government parties won only 70 of the necessary 90 seats.

Mette Frederiksen was given the first assignment to form a new government as royal investigator (kongelig undersøger) and tried to stitch together a centre-left government. Moderaterne resisted, and at Publicistklubben's annual post-election debate Lars Løkke Rasmussen said that he found it hard to see himself sitting in a government that had to check with Enhedslisten's leadership. The key issues were above all economic policy, corporate taxation and labour supply reforms. That led him to turn to the right and propose Venstre leader Troels Lund Poulsen as royal investigator.

Meanwhile Dansk Folkeparti leader Morten Messerschmidt had already said a firm no on election night to sitting in a government with Moderaterne: "We will eat him and his people up every single day." Danmarksdemokraterne leader Inger Støjberg did not want a government with Moderaterne either.

Troels Lund Poulsen (V) likewise saw no continuation of the government cooperation: "There are now two obvious options for Venstre: either we get a blue centre government, or we go into opposition," he said on election night.

His proposed government was a right-wing VLAK government (Venstre, Liberal Alliance and Konservative), without Moderaterne, which Lars Løkke Rasmussen called "a trial balloon that cannot fly". Mette Frederiksen was again given the task of sounding out the terrain. After a third attempt she was finally able to present her centre-left coalition. It was not a centre government, but one that leans towards the centre, Lars Løkke Rasmussen observed.

The Election Redrew the Political Map

The election result meant above all historic setbacks for the two traditionally larger parties: Socialdemokratiet and the centre-right Venstre. Socialdemokratiet had its worst election since 1903, falling by almost six percentage points to 21.8 per cent of the vote. It nevertheless remains the largest party.

Venstre's loss of three percentage points to 10.1 per cent means not only that the party loses its position as the second-largest party in the Danish Parliament; it is also its worst election ever. It now has both Liberal Alliance, with 9.4 per cent, and Dansk Folkeparti, which rose sharply to 9.1 per cent, breathing down its neck. Both Enhedslisten and SF gained, to 6.3 and 11.6 per cent respectively. Enhedslisten became the largest party in Copenhagen, where Socialdemokratiet lost the lord mayor's post to SF last November. Venstre was left with no seats at all in the Danish capital.

The centrist Moderaterne lost two seats but still secured the coveted kingmaker role, with 7.7 per cent of the vote and 14 seats.



Venstre leader Troels Lund Poulsen. The party lost heavily and had its worst election ever.



ELECTION IN DENMARK

The Government's 21 Ministers – Majority Women for the First Time

The number of ministerial posts falls from 25 to 21, and for the first time a majority are women: 11. Lars Løkke Rasmussen (M) keeps the post of minister for foreign affairs, and former minister for finance Nicolai Wammen (S) swaps places with former minister for justice Peter Hummelgaard (S). The change gives a hint of whom Mette Frederiksen sees as her successor. The new minister for social affairs and Nordic cooperation is Monika Rubin of Moderaterne, a new female politician who has been put forward as a rival to the crown princes.

When the new Danish government was presented this summer, several faces from Socialdemokratiet (S) and Moderaterne (M) were familiar from the previous government. Party leaders Mette Frederiksen and Lars Løkke Rasmussen stay in their posts, others get a new portfolio and some are dropped altogether. Radikale Venstre (RV) and Socialistisk Folkeparti (SF) are in government for the first time since 2015 and 2014 respectively. Radikale Venstre leader Martin Lidegaard can now also call himself minister for business and competitiveness, while SF's Pia Olsen Dyhr is the new minister for economic and interior affairs.

Agriculture Has No Minister for the First Time in 130 Years

The list of ministers is trimmed from 25 to 21 posts. One of the posts to go is minister for agriculture, which has existed in Denmark since 1896. The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries becomes the Ministry of Nature and Animal Welfare, led by Christian Rabjerg Madsen of Socialdemokratiet.

The government has also abolished the posts of minister for Europe and minister for transport, the latter merged with urban and rural affairs under Karina Lorentzen Dehnhardt (SF). The Ministry of Digital Affairs is in turn merged with the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, something criticised by former digitalisation minister Caroline Stage (M), who says digitalisation will now become "a hyphen in another ministry".



Mette Frederiksen (S) begins her third term as Prime Minister, a post she has held since 2019. She could thus become the second-longest-serving prime minister, provided she keeps the post for the whole term until 2030.

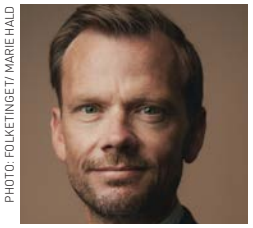


Pia Olsen Dyhr (SF) becomes the new Minister for Economic and Interior Affairs. She was previously Minister for Transport and Minister for Trade and Investment in the Helle Thorning-Schmidt government, 2011–2014.



Lars Løkke Rasmussen (M) keeps his post as Minister for Foreign Affairs in the new government. He was previously leader of Venstre and was Prime Minister from 2015 to 2019.

PHOTO: FOLKETINGET/ MARIE HALD



Peter Hummelgaard (S) formerly Minister for Justice, takes on the role of Minister for Finance in the new government. His previous job is taken over by party colleague Nicolai Wammen.



Monika Rubin (M), Moderaterne's political chair, becomes Minister for Social Affairs and Nordic Cooperation. She has been an MP since 2022 but has not held a ministerial post.

PHOTO: FOLKETINGET/ MARIE HALD



Karina Lorentzen Dehnhardt (SF) takes over from Signe Munk, who has gone on sick leave, as Minister for Urban and Rural Affairs and Transport.

PHOTO: FOLKETINGET/ MARIE HALD



Martin Lidegaard (RV) leader of Radikale Venstre, becomes Minister for Business and Competitiveness.

All New Ministers:

Socialdemokratiet

- **Prime Minister:** Mette Frederiksen
- **Minister for Finance:** Peter Hummelgaard
- **Minister for Justice:** Nicolai Wammen
- **Minister for Immigration and Integration:** Morten Bødskov
- **Minister for Education:** Magnus Heunicke
- **Minister for Employment and Gender Equality:** Ane Halsboe-Jørgensen
- **Minister of Defence:** Jeppe Bruus
- **Minister for Health and Ecclesiastical Affairs:** Ida Auken
- **Minister for Nature and Animal Welfare:** Christian Rabjerg Madsen

Radikale Venstre

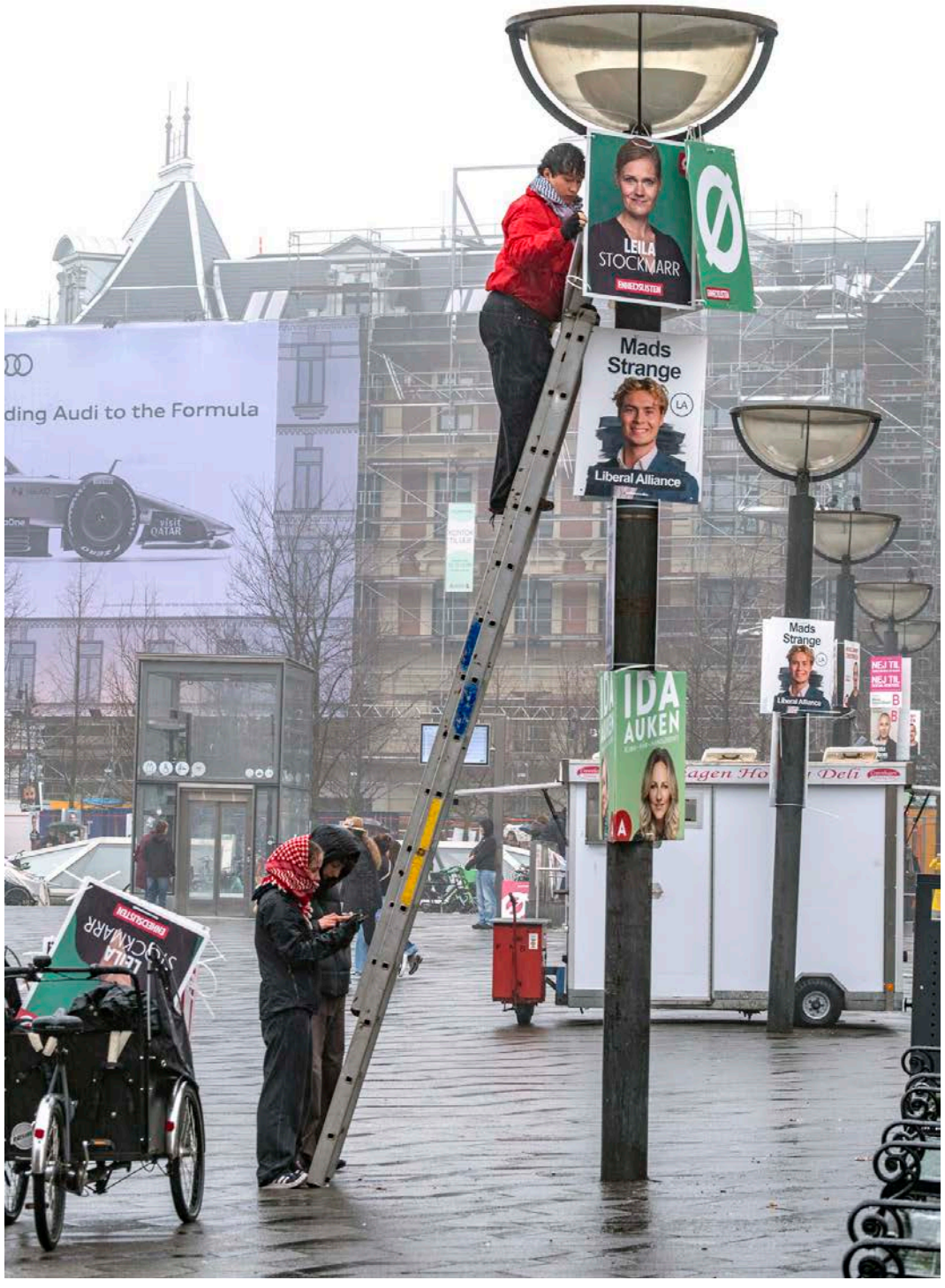
- **Minister for Business and Competitiveness:** Martin Lidegaard
- **Minister for Climate, Energy and Utilities:** Samira Nawa
- **Minister for Culture:** Zenia Stampe

Socialistisk Folkeparti

- **Minister for Economic and Interior Affairs:** Pia Olsen Dyhr
- **Minister for Urban and Rural Affairs and Transport:** Karina Lorentzen Dehnhardt
- **Minister of Resilience and Preparedness:** Lisbeth Bech-Nielsen
- **Minister for Children, Senior Citizens and Housing:** Jacob Mark
- **Minister for the Environment:** Maria Reumert Gjerding

Moderaterne

- **Minister for Foreign Affairs:** Lars Løkke Rasmussen
- **Minister for Science, Higher Education and Digital Affairs:** Christina Egelund
- **Minister for Taxation and Economic Growth:** Jakob Engel-Schmidt
- **Minister for Social Affairs and for Nordic Cooperation:** Monika Rubin



ELECTION IN DENMARK

This is the Danish Electoral System

Denmark has chosen to separate the national election from the regional and municipal ones. Parliament elections are called by the prime minister within four years of the previous election, while local and regional elections are always held on the third Tuesday in November every four years.

The Danish constitution sets no fixed minimum notice for calling a Parliament election, but in practice it is usually between three and five weeks before election day. A Danish campaign is therefore often very intense.

One advantage of separating the parliament election from the municipal and regional ones is that local issues can get more attention. A drawback is that turnout in local elections tends to be lower. While 84 per cent of eligible Danes voted in the latest national election, turnout in the latest municipal and regional election was 69 per cent.

The Campaign Starts with Poster Day

The Danish campaign officially kicks off with plakatdagen (poster day). On the dot of noon on the fourth Saturday before election day, the parties' campaign teams head out to put up election posters. The posters may stay up until eight days after election day. Poster day is an established tradition in Denmark and covers national and regional elections as well as European Parliament elections.

Political TV advertising, however, is banned from the moment the election is called until after election day. Many parties instead use social media and campaign tours. This year's campaign was marked by parties from right to left using AI-generated images in their advertising, which drew some criticism. Johan Farkas, a researcher in digital media and democracy at the University of Copenhagen, called it "slopaganda", a blend of AI slop and propaganda. Venstre was also criticised for using an AI image of a uniformed soldier. It is forbidden to use people in uniform in political advertising, but Venstre defended it by saying the person was not real.



Venstre was criticised for bending the rules. The picture is AI-generated, which allowed the party to sidestep the ban on depicting uniformed personnel.

Government Formation Begins with the Kongerunde

A new government is appointed during a dronning- eller kongerunde (queen's or king's round), a tradition in Denmark since 1909 that corresponds to the Speaker's round in Sweden. The parties present the candidate they support to the monarch, who then appoints a suitable candidate as royal investigator. The process is a central part of government formation, but the monarch's role is purely symbolic. The royal investigator then tries to negotiate enough support, preferably a majority. Denmark, like Sweden, applies negative parliamentarism, which means a government does not need a majority behind it, as long as there is no majority against it.

Turnout Fell for the Fourth Time in a Row

Danish turnout has declined gradually since 2011. This year's election, in which 84 per cent of eligible Danes voted, had the lowest turnout since 1990, according to Statistics Denmark. One explanation, according to election researcher Kasper Møller Hansen, may be demographics: the '68 generation has always been the most dedicated voters. As their numbers dwindle, they are replaced by generations that do not vote as much, he told Ritzau.

At the same time the number of polling stations has fallen, from 1,966 in 1979 to 1,314 at the latest election. Although the effect is probably small, even minor obstacles can ultimately affect turnout negatively, Møller Hansen writes on LinkedIn.

ELECTION IN DENMARK

Meet the Danish Parliament Parties

The Danish Parliament has 179 members representing 16 different parties (there are currently four independents). Of the members, 175 are from Denmark and four come from the autonomous territories of Greenland and the Faroe Islands, which are part of the Rigsfællesskabet (the Unity of the Realm). The Danish electoral threshold is lower than the Swedish: only two per cent is needed to get in. There is, however, another barrier: for a new party to be allowed to stand in a Parliament election, around 21,000 signatures from voters are required, so-called *vælgererklæringer* (voter declarations). That corresponds to 1/175 of the valid Danish votes at the latest Parliament election. The signatures are given electronically and are valid for 18 months.

The Government: 82 Seats

SOCIALDEMOKRATIET
Party leader: Mette Frederiksen
Seats: 38 (50 in the previous election)
The Danish Parliament's largest party. A centre-left party in the red bloc that combines, among other things, welfare policy with a strict migration line. Has held the prime ministership since 2019 in various constellations.

SOCIALISTISK FOLKEPARTI
Party leader: Pia Olsen Dyhr
Seats: 20 (15)
Socialistisk Folkeparti (usually just SF) is a red-green party founded in 1959. Its ideological basis is democratic socialism, and it advocates green policy, welfare and social equality.

RADIKALE VENSTRE
Party leader: Martin Lidegaard
Seats: 10 (7)
A social-liberal party that traditionally belongs to the red bloc. Founded in 1905 through a breakaway from Venstre. Central issues are education, international cooperation and green transition.

MODERATERNE
Party leader: Lars Løkke Rasmussen
Seats: 14 (16)
A centre party founded in 2022 by Venstre's former leader Lars Løkke Rasmussen, which wants to abolish bloc politics. Core issues are healthcare, bringing the hospitals under state control, pension reform and lower tax with better balance.

The Government's Support Parties: 16 Seats

ENHEDSLISTEN
Party leader: Pelle Dragsted
Seats: 11 (9)
A red-green left-wing party focused on economic equality and a strong public sector. Founded in 1989 as an electoral alliance between Venstresocialisterne, Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti and Socialistisk Arbejderparti. Wants, among other things, to introduce a carbon tax and invest more in welfare.

ALTERNATIVET
Party leader: Franciska Rosenkilde
Seats: 5 (6)
A green party counted in the red bloc. Climate is its main issue. It wants to create a sustainable future for both people and nature, reach climate neutrality by 2035 and introduce a high carbon tax for Danish companies.

The Right-Wing Bloc: 73 Seats

VENSTRE
Party leader: Troels Lund Poulsen
Seats: 18 (23)
Denmark's largest centre-right party, focused on enterprise, growth and the work-first policy. Was part of the cross-bloc SVM government in the previous term. Has split several times, including when Lars Løkke Rasmussen founded Moderaterne and Inger Støjberg founded Danmarksdemokraterne.

LIBERAL ALLIANCE
Party leader: Alex Vanopslagh
Seats: 15 (14)
Founded in 2008, after its predecessor Ny Alliance split in 2007. Ny Alliance had in turn been formed by breakaways from Radikale Venstre and Det Konservative Folkeparti. The party puts freedom and liberalism at its centre and advocates lower taxes and a smaller public sector.

DANMARKSDEMOKRATERNE
Party leader: Inger Støjberg
Seats: 10 (14)
A national-liberal party with a strong base in rural areas that wants a strict migration policy. Founded in 2022 by former immigration and integration minister Inger Støjberg after she left Venstre.

DET KONSERVATIVE FOLKEPARTI
Party leader: Mona Juul
Seats: 13 (10)
Det Konservative Folkeparti (KF), or simply Konservative (K), was founded in 1916 and combines market economy with a focus on responsibility, security and tradition.

DANSK FOLKEPARTI
Party leader: Morten Messerschmidt
Seats: 16 (5)
A national-conservative party focused on immigration, policy for older people and Danish national identity. The party is, among other things, critical of the EU and wants a stricter immigration policy.

BORGERNES PARTI
Party leader: Lars Boje Mathiesen
Seats: 1 (4)
A centre-right, libertarian party that advocates sharply lower taxes, a smaller public sector, greater individual freedom and a very restrictive migration policy. Founded in 2024 by people from Nye Borgerlige, which was dissolved during the previous term.

The North Atlantic Seats: 4 Seats

INUIT ATAQATIGIIT
Member of the Danish Parliament: Naaja H. Nathanielsen
The socialist party Inuit Ataqatigiit (IA) was formed as a group in 1976 and became a formal party in 1978. At the Danish Parliament election it became the largest Greenlandic party, with 26.6 per cent of the vote.

NALERAQ
Member of the Danish Parliament: Qarsoq Høegh-Dam
Founded in 2014 and won the second Greenlandic seat with 24.6 per cent of the vote. Campaigns for rapid Greenlandic independence and emphasises welfare and equality.

SAMBANDSFLOKKURIN
Member of the Danish Parliament: Anna Falkenberg
Holds one of the Faroese seats. Founded in 1906, a liberal party focused on business development and culture. Favours the union with Denmark. Won 25.2 per cent of the Faroese vote.

JAVNAÐARFLOKKURIN
Member of the Danish Parliament: Sjúrður Skaale
Won the other Faroese seat. A social democratic party that accepts the union with Denmark but defends it less strongly than Sambandsflokkurin. Won 44.9 per cent of the vote.

IN DEPTH

ELECTION IN SWEDEN

Distribution of the Swedish Parliament's (Riksdagen) 349 Seats

The Red-Greens

Includes Vänsterpartiet, Socialdemokraterna, Miljöpartiet and Centerpartiet.

Together they hold **176 Seats**

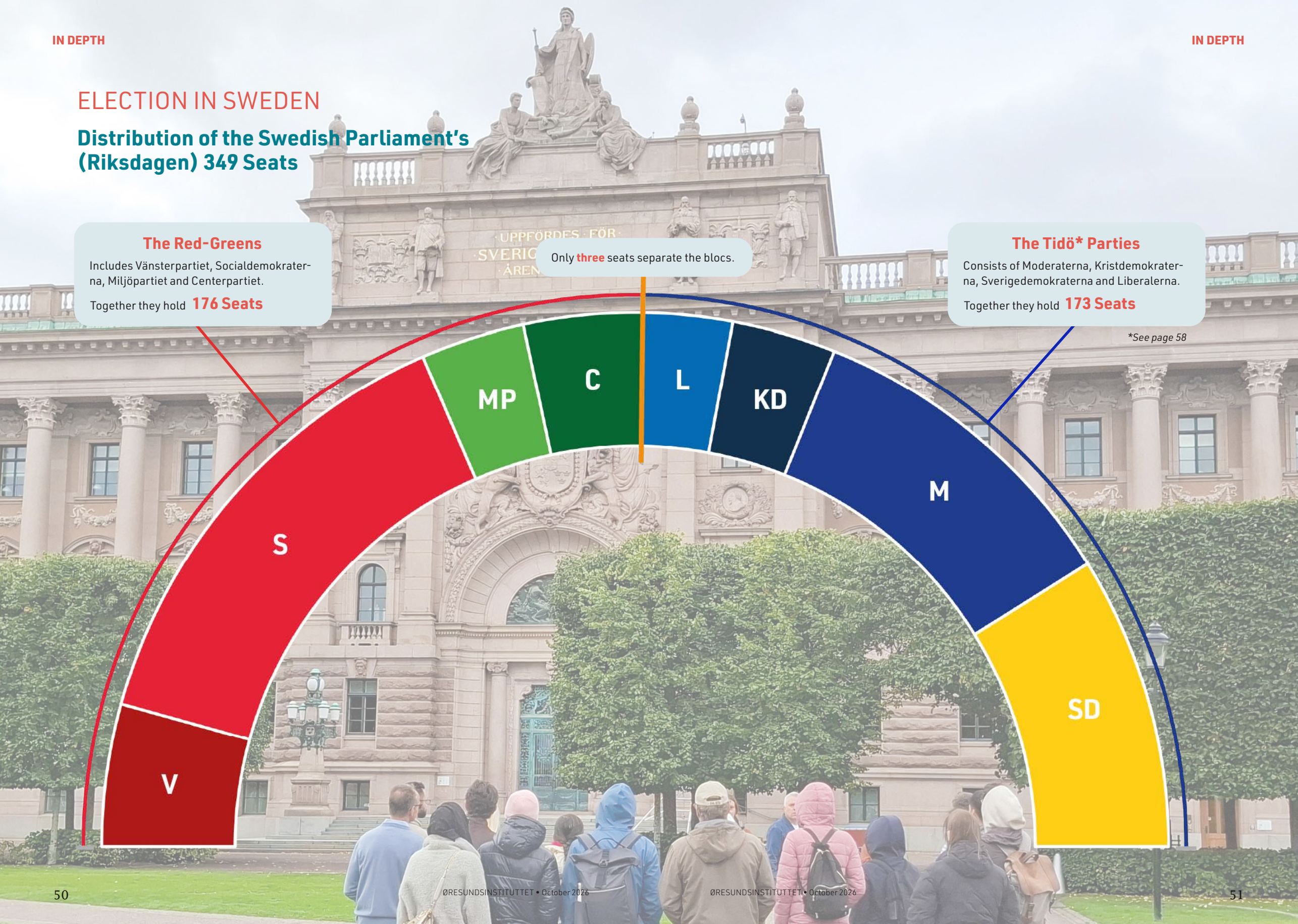
Only **three** seats separate the blocs.

The Tidö* Parties

Consists of Moderaterna, Kristdemokraterna, Sverigedemokraterna and Liberalerna.

Together they hold **173 Seats**

*See page 58



ØRESUNDSINSTITUTTET • October 2026

ELECTION IN SWEDEN

From Big Poll Lead to Narrow Win for the Opposition

Swedish government formation is under way following the Parliament election on 13 September. Tough negotiations are in progress to bring together parties stretching from the centre to the left flank, where red lines will have to be crossed if there is to be a government at all. Many twists remain at the time this report is published, but it is clear that the red-green parties, the former opposition, won 176 seats against 173 for the former right-wing Tidö government and Sverigedemokraterna.

The Swedish campaign was largely about the parties positioning themselves in relation to one another.

"Vänsterpartiet does not want what happened with Sverigedemokraterna, being left outside with an agreement. They want to sit in government. Centerpartiet does not want to sit in a government that Vänsterpartiet is part of, but they can cooperate," said Moa Berglöf, political editor at Sydsvenskan, describing the situation at a post-election meeting in Copenhagen organised by Altinget and Øresundsinstituttet.

To the extent that the campaign was about promises and policy proposals, personal finances dominated, with parties from both right and left promising more money in people's wallets, especially for families with children. Last election's big issue, law and order, got less space but was still relatively high on the agenda.

For a long time the opposition, made up of Socialdemokraterna, Centerpartiet, Miljöpartiet and Vänsterpartiet, looked set for a big win, with a ten-percentage-point lead in the polls. But the closer election day came, the smaller the gap between the blocs became, and the result ended up at 49.6 per cent against 48.8 per cent. One significant factor in the narrowing was that Liberalerna, which throughout the term had been below the four per cent needed to clear the Swedish Parliament threshold, staged a big recovery in the final week. With the help of tactical support votes, it stayed in the Swedish Parliament and increased its seats.

Red Lines Complicate Government Formation

The next phase, government formation, has now begun. After the 2022 election the previous government, made up of Moderaterna, Kristdemokraterna and Liberalerna, reached agreement with Sverigedemokraterna on how cooperation would work relatively quickly. SD became a support party with permanent representation among civil servants in the Government Offices' coordination office. This time it looks harder.

Centerpartiet and Vänsterpartiet are far apart on many issues, not least economic ones, and neither wants to let the other into government. Vänsterpartiet has also demanded that it must itself be in government in order to let it through. It is nevertheless less likely that the centrist Centerpartiet will instead choose to cooperate with the blue parties, since they categorically refuse to cooperate with Sverigedemokraterna.

There is currently no realistic alternative to a government across the centre either. Political analysts say at the time of this report's publication that the most likely outcome is that the red-green parties will eventually find a joint solution.

Magdalena Andersson Given Exploratory Assignment

On 18 September, five days after the election, Magdalena Andersson of Socialdemokraterna was



Magdalena Andersson, leader of Socialdemokraterna, is at the time of this report's publication the person holding the exploratory assignment to find a basis for Sweden's next government.

13 September
Election Day

17 September
Red-Greens Emerge as Winners
The red-greens win 176 seats and Ulf Kristersson (M) resigns as prime minister. He continues to lead a caretaker government.

18 September
Andersson Given Exploratory Assignment
Andreas Norlén (M) tasks Magdalena Andersson (S) with examining the possibilities for forming a government.

2 October
Andersson Gets the Assignment Again
After the Social Democratic leader initially stepped down from the role following a dispute over the election of the Speaker, she is once again tasked with examining the possibilites to forming a new government.

15 October
Andersson loses the vote
The first vote on the Prime Minister and the Government takes place following Magdalena Andersson's exploratory talks. As expected, the motion to appoint Andersson as Prime Minister is voted down.

19 October
Thand Ringqvist Given Exploratory Assignment
The leader of Centerpartiet, Elisabeth Thand Ringqvist, is tasked with exploring the possibilities for a centrist government. One week later, she concludes that there is a lack of parliamentary support.

3 November
Voting on Thand Ringqvist
A vote is being held on Elisabeth Thand Ringqvist as Prime Minister.

12 November
Autumn Budget Must Be Presented
By 12 November the autumn budget must be presented by a new government, otherwise there will be a so-called caretaker budget. This puts pressure on the negotiations.

tasked with exploring the conditions for forming a government. The negotiations began, however, with conflicts between the red-green parties. After it became clear that Vänsterpartiet backed Moderaterna's Andreas Norlén as Speaker, Andersson chose, after ten days, to hand back the assignment. A new round of talks with party leaders, led by Andreas Norlén, who was elected Speaker for the third time, began.

On 2 October Norlén again gave Magdalena Andersson the exploratory assignment, this time with a deadline of 12 October. As expected, Magdalena Andersson lost the vote in the parliament on 15 October, when the Speaker put forward the proposal for her to become Prime Minister.

Subsequently, the Speaker tasked Centre Party leader Elisabeth Thand Ringqvist with exploring the prospects for a centrist coalition comprising Socialdemokraterna, Centerpartiet, Miljöpartiet, Kristdemokraterna and Liberalerna. However, just one week later, she announced that there was no parliamentary support for such a solution. A vote in the parliament on Elisabeth Thand Ringqvist as Prime Minister is due to take place, at which she is expected to be voted down. The task will then pass to Ulf Kristersson of Moderaterna.

The Way Forward Is Uncertain

In the beginning of October, Centerpartiet invited all the red-green parties to talks. However, no actual negotiations have yet got under way.

Representatives of Socialdemokraterna, Moderaterna and Centerpartiet, who took part in the post-election meeting with Altinget and Øresundsinstituttet at the end of September, nevertheless then believed a new government will be in place before Christmas.

If a government proposal fails in the Swedish Parliament, it is up to the Speaker who takes over the exploratory assignment. It could go back to Magdalena Andersson, pass to the opposition's candidate, or he could choose another solution.

A total of four votes are possible. If none of them passes, an extra election is called.

The Municipal Elections

Skåne's Municipalities Lean Further Left than the National Parliament

The municipal elections in Skåne follow the trends of the Swedish parliament election but lean further left. Vänsterpartiet (V) and Miljöpartiet (MP) gained more than nationally, and Socialdemokraterna (S) lost less. Unlike the country as a whole, Liberalerna lost ground in Skåne's municipal elections. Sverigedemokraterna, which is strong in Skåne, lost the most, but not quite as much as in the Swedish Parliament election.

Success for Vänsterpartiet in Malmö

In Malmö, Vänsterpartiet had a record-strong election and won two more seats. Socialdemokraterna and Miljöpartiet also had the wind at their backs. The left's success means the red-greens together have 35 of 61 seats on the municipal council. It also means Katrin Stjernfeldt Jammeh (S) continues as mayor.

S and M Continue to Govern in Lund

In Lund the election's winner is Moderaterna, which gained four seats. Together with Socialdemokraterna, it will continue to run the municipality in the coming term. The two parties hold 29 of 65 seats, so not a majority of their own, and have therefore sought support elsewhere. They have found it with the local party FörNyaLund, which has four seats.

Right Loses Ground in Helsingborg

"The right looks set to keep its grip on the town hall by losing," wrote Helsingborgs Dagblad after the election in the city. And that is exactly what happened. When the votes were counted, the blocs were one seat apart, and the right was able to keep power. Sverigedemokraterna, which was a support party in the previous term, now takes a place in the political leadership. Helsingborg thus becomes the largest municipality in Sweden where SD is part of the administration.

Election Fraud Dominated the Debate

In the weeks just after the election, the media were full of articles about suspected irregularities and election fraud. The incidents included PostNord delivering advance votes to the wrong address. But also a widely reported case in Dalarna, where a Vänsterpartiet member was elected to the Swedish Parliament through preference votes and where the police opened an investigation after reports that people had bussed voters to polling stations, handed out pre-marked ballot papers and, unlike the actions already mentioned, which would clearly be illegal, paid for votes. No election fraud has yet been established, however. Researchers at the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) say the events are being exploited on social media, among other things by anonymous accounts, to discredit the Swedish electoral system.

According to Anders Sannerstedt, associate professor of political science at Lund University, it is relatively common for politicians with a non-European background to be elected to municipal councils through preference votes, not least in segregated areas. The politicians in question come from a wide range of parties. Sannerstedt also says the rules are unclear and that the Swedish voting system is in some respects vulnerable. He therefore advocates an inquiry for the future.



Centerpartiet leader Elisabeth Thand Ringqvist (pictured) and Vänsterpartiet's Nooshi Dadgostar are key players as Sweden's new government is negotiated. The parties block each other in a future government.

The Regional Elections

Moderaterna Keeps Power in Region Skåne

Carl Johan Sonesson's (M) centre-right administration in Region Skåne gets a third term. Moderaterna gained almost two percentage points in the election, while the three cooperating parties, Liberalerna, Kristdemokraterna and Sverigedemokraterna, lost ground. Despite election gains for Vänsterpartiet and Miljöpartiet, the left wing did not manage to gather a majority.

Since 2022 Moderaterna has run Skåne together with Liberalerna and Kristdemokraterna, with support from Sverigedemokraterna on budget matters. According to the election result, this constellation can now continue to govern for four more years.

Moderaterna strengthens its position as the second-largest party in the region, rising from 21.8 to 23.7 per cent of the vote.

Socialdemokraterna is still the largest party in Region Skåne, but the election result means a small decline of 0.8 percentage points to 28.3 per cent. The party has thus failed for the third election in a row to take power in the region.

Centrist-left coalition Will Run Region Stockholm

At the end of October, following 38 days of negotiations, a new administration for Region Stockholm was announced. In the previous term Stockholm was run by Socialdemokraterna, Miljöpartiet and Centerpartiet with support from Vänsterpartiet. The cooperation with Vänsterpartiet is now coming to an end, and instead Liberalerna and Kristdemokraterna are joining the new administration alongside Socialdemokraterna and Miljöpartiet. Socialdemokraterna also retain the post of Mayor.

Socialdemokraterna lost 4.9 percentage points in the election and ended up on 28.1 per cent, while Centerpartiet and especially Miljöpartiet gained in the election.

Moderaterna gained the most of any party in Region Stockholm, up 3.7 percentage points to 23.9 per cent, but will nevertheless remain in opposition.

ELECTION IN SWEDEN

This is the Swedish Electoral System

In Sweden, the parliament election and the elections to municipal and regional councils are always held on the same day. New this year was that a majority of voters received their poll card digitally. Stolen ballot papers and long queues have put the design of ballot papers back on the agenda.

In Sweden, the parliament election and the elections to municipal and regional councils are always held on the same day, the second Sunday in September every four years. This has contributed to high turnout in municipal and regional elections, around 80 per cent. Swedish citizens aged 18 or over may vote in the Swedish Parliament election if they are, or have been, registered as resident in Sweden. Swedes living abroad can therefore vote in the Swedish Parliament election, but not in municipal and regional elections. In those, citizens of other EEA countries may instead vote if they are registered as resident in the municipality. Citizens of other countries and stateless people may also vote if they have been registered as resident in Sweden for three consecutive years.

Majority Received Poll Card Digitally for the First Time

The poll card usually drops through the letterbox in August. Ahead of this year's election, a majority of eligible voters instead received it in their digital mailbox for the first time. Of just over 8.6 million poll cards, around 6.5 million were sent digitally, while around 2.1 million came on paper by post, as before.

According to Anna Nyqvist, chief of staff at the Swedish Election Authority (Valmyndigheten), digitalisation is a way of increasing accessibility, but also of ensuring that poll cards reach the right address.

"Digital poll cards mean greater accessibility of personal voting rights information for voters, who will be able to log in to their digital mailbox and see their poll card wherever they are. With digital poll cards we can also be more certain that poll cards reach voters, and that they arrive in time."

New System for Ballot Papers Under Discussion

In Sweden, party-specific ballot papers have been used for over 100 years, which means each party has its own ballot paper for each election. Voters therefore have to pick up a number of ballot papers before voting, and to avoid revealing their vote they usually take more papers than they need, from different parties. That can cause more than just confusion among voters. Stolen and moved ballot papers have been a recurring problem, as was reported again at this year's election. Long queues as voters picked up ballot papers were also seen in many places.

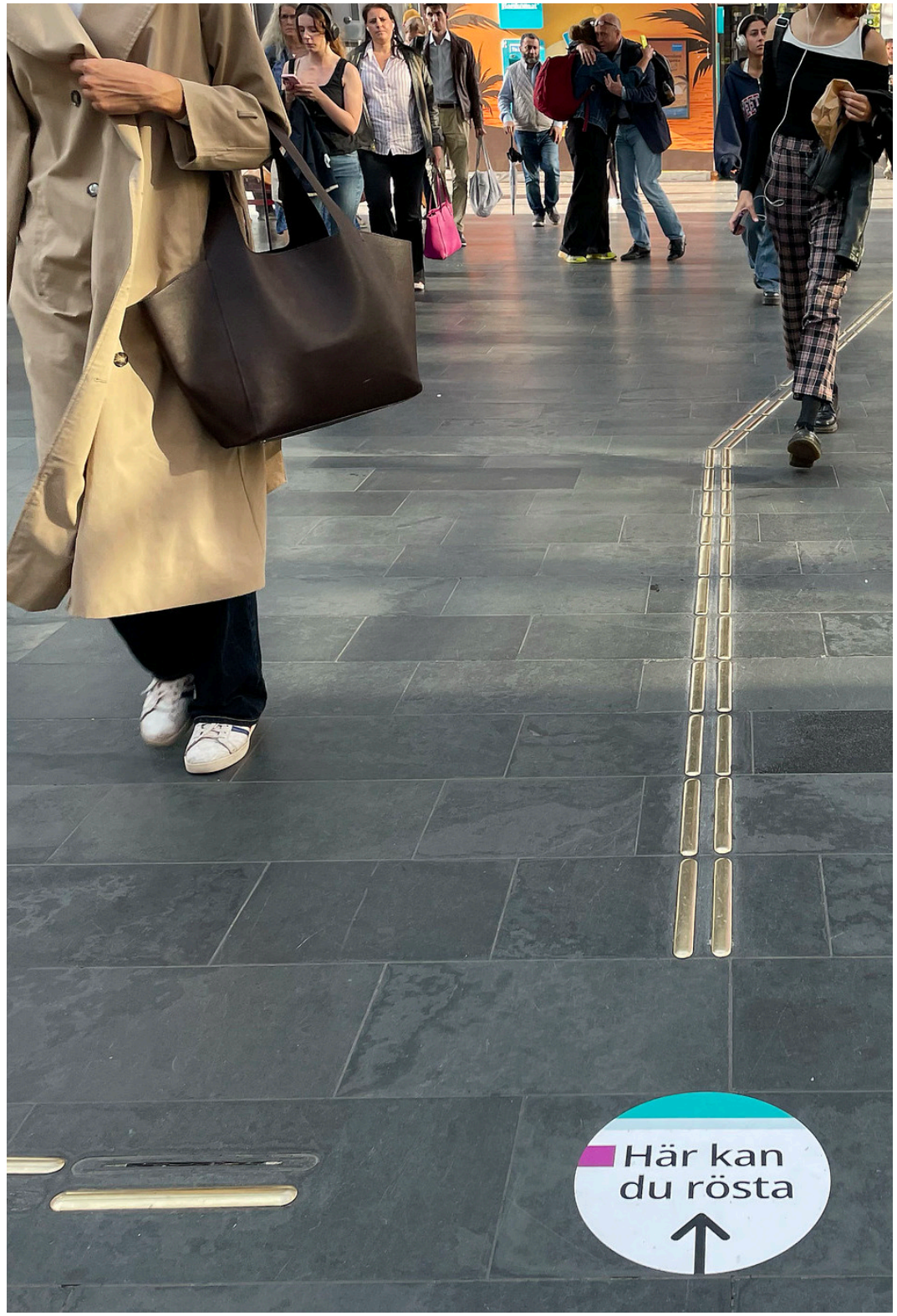
Now the design of the ballot paper is to be investigated by Valsedelskommittén (the ballot paper committee), again. Two main tracks are to be examined: joint ballot papers on which the voter ticks a party, like the Danish one, and a completely neutral paper on which the voter writes a candidate number.

According to Valsedelskommittén, around 710 million ballot papers were printed for the 2022 election, and only about three per cent of them were used. With a new design, the committee estimates the number could fall by two thirds. About 744 million ballot papers were printed at this year's election. The committee is to submit its final report in August 2027.

Government Formation Starts with the Speaker's Round

Government formation in Sweden begins with a so-called Speaker's round (talmansrunda), in which the Speaker meets all party leaders to discuss the way towards a government. The Speaker then often asks a party leader to explore the conditions for forming a government. If the exploratory talks show that a government can be tolerated by the Swedish Parliament, the Speaker proposes that person as prime minister, and the parliament votes on the proposal.

The principle is the same as in Denmark: it is not required that a majority supports the government, only that no majority is against it. If more than half the members vote no, the process starts again and the Speaker puts forward a new candidate. The Speaker has four attempts, and if none succeeds an extra election is called.



ELECTION IN SWEDEN

Meet the Swedish Parliament Parties

The Swedish Parliament has 349 members representing eight different parties. The Swedish electoral threshold is higher than the Danish one: four per cent is needed to get in, which is probably a contributing reason why the Swedish Parliament has significantly fewer parties than the Danish one.

The Tidö Parties (the previous government cooperation)*: 173 Seats

MODERATERNA
Party leader: Ulf Kristersson
Seats: 70 (68 in the previous election)
Sweden's leading centre-right party, which held the prime ministership in 2022–2026. Moderaterna is a liberal-conservative party focused on law and order, tax cuts, the labour market and defence. Moderaterna has been the second-largest party in the Swedish Parliament since 1979, except in the previous term.

KRISTDEMOKRATERNA
Party leader: Ebba Busch
Seats: 22 (19)
A conservative party based on Christian values, focused on healthcare, law and order and limited immigration. Kristdemokraterna has its roots in the Free Church movement in Sweden, but has partly distanced itself from this heritage. The party was in government in 2022–2026.

SVERIGEDEMOKRATERNA
Party leader: Jimmie Åkesson
Seats: 62 (73)
A nationalist and social-conservative party whose core issues include reduced immigration and law and order. Founded in the 1980s by people from Nazi and racist circles. Has sat in the Swedish Parliament since 2010 and was a support party to the government in 2022–2026.

LIBERALERNA
Party leader: Simona Mohamsson
Seats: 19 (16)
A liberal party focused on education, defence and European cooperation. Has a long history in the Swedish Parliament and was formerly called Folkpartiet. Has mainly cooperated with the other centre-right parties, but a couple of times across the centre. Was in government in 2022–2026.



** The Tidö collaboration was named after Tidö Castle, where the governing parties at the time – Moderaterna, Kristdemokraterna and Liberalerna – reached an agreement with the supporting party, Sverigedemokraterna, on the formation of the government during the previous parliamentary term.*



The Red-Greens: 176 Seats

SOCIALDEMOKRATERNA
Party leader: Magdalena Andersson
Seats: 99 (107)
The Swedish Parliament's largest party. A social democratic party in the left bloc that puts the emphasis on healthcare, welfare, the labour market and equality in society. Has tightened its policy on crime and punishment and on immigration.

MILJÖPARTIET
Spokespersons: Amanda Lind & Daniel Helldén
Seats: 22 (18)
A green party with environment, climate and diversity as its main issues. Founded in the 1980s with roots in the environmental movement. Originally did not want to place itself on the political left-right scale, but is now on the left flank in national politics.

VÄNSTERPARTIET
Party leader: Nooshi Dadgostar
Seats: 30 (24)
A socialist party with equality, feminism, climate and welfare as its main issues. Started as a communist party, but distanced itself from communism in the late 20th century. Has often supported social democratic governments, but has never been in government.

CENTERPARTIET
Party leader: Elisabeth Thand Ringqvist
Seats: 25 (24)
A social-liberal, green party focused on environment and climate, entrepreneurship and rural issues. Centerpartiet started as a farmers' party. Historically the party has mainly cooperated with centre-right parties, but in this election it backed a prime minister from Socialdemokraterna.

Part III

PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONS

- New to the Post
- Organisations in the Øresund Region





Monika Rubin (M) took up her post as Denmark's minister for Nordic cooperation in June.

Denmark's Nordic Minister: Cooperation Strengthens Business

Greater cooperation within the business community to attract more risk capital, fewer digital obstacles across borders and better labour-market matching across the Øresund. Those are three issues that Monika Rubin (Moderaterne), Denmark's minister for Nordic cooperation, wants to work on in the coming years. But the issue she sees as most important of all is that the Nordic countries cooperate in light of today's geopolitical reality.

Monika Rubin took office as minister for social affairs and Nordic cooperation in June, but her connection to Sweden is not new.

"I actually held my wedding party in a cottage in Sweden, because my father-in-law has a summer house outside Laholm. The ceremony was in Denmark, and then we all drove up to the Helsingborg ferry, took it across and drove on in convoy. So I have a very warm relationship with Sweden. And besides that, I worked as a doctor for many years, and there is quite a lot of cooperation between Denmark and Sweden there, right down to student level. I studied alongside many Swedes at the University of Copenhagen," she says.

Business issues are close to Monika Rubin's heart, and she sees opportunities for greater cooperation across borders in the area. One problem she highlights is the difficulty smaller companies have in finding risk capital.

"How do we get our companies to grow, and how can we cooperate in research, in health, in innovation? There is really great potential across the borders between Denmark and Sweden. And it is no secret that Sweden is also very skilled in the defence industry. There I think there is something we in Denmark can learn," she says.

Digital Border Obstacles a Priority

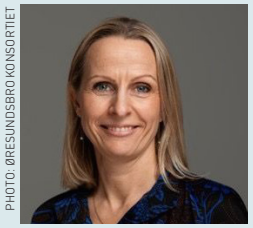
Countering border obstacles is another task she stresses, not least through The Freedom of Movement Council. It is about, among other things, securing better digital access across borders, for example digital IDs for people who travel or work within the Nordic region.

Danish-Swedish Cooperation



Monika Rubin (M)
Minister for Social Affairs and Minister for Nordic Cooperation.

PHOTO: ØRESUNDSBRO KONSORTIET



Winnie Sand New Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at Øresundsbro Konsortiet.

PHOTO: ØRESUNDSBRO KONSORTIET



Åsa Melvanius New Chief Digital Officer (CDO) at Øresundsbro Konsortiet, responsible for digitalisation and AI.

PHOTO: UDENRIGSMINISTERIET



Laura Thorborg New Head of the Embassy's Trade Department for Economic Diplomacy at the Danish Embassy in Stockholm.

Danish Ministers

PHOTO: MARIE HALD/FOLKETINGET



Karina Lorentzen Dehnhardt (SF)
Minister for Urban and Rural Affairs and Transport

PHOTO: MARIE HALD/FOLKETINGET



Lisbeth Bech-Nielsen (SF)
Minister of Resilience and Preparedness



Jeppe Bruus (S) moves from Minister for the Green Tripartite to Minister of Defence

PHOTO: MARIE HALD/FOLKETINGET



Ane Halsboe-Jørgensen (S)
Minister for Employment and Gender Equality

"There are some border obstacles at the moment, but we have started measures to improve the situation. Also in relation to the banking system, so that you can get a bank account when you work in Sweden as a Dane."

She has not yet attended a meeting of the Greater Copenhagen Task Force, which works specifically on obstacles and opportunities in the Øresund region, and the group is now waiting for a new Swedish Nordic minister before the next meeting is booked. But Monika Rubin has been briefed on everything from the situation of the life science industry in the Øresund region to the plans for SAS and Copenhagen Airport. Among other things, the discussion has concerned the gains that better job matching between the countries could bring.

"In Denmark we lack labour, and in southern Sweden there are more unemployed than in Denmark. So can we do something to make mobility between the countries, in terms of labour, better? It is no secret that the party I belong to, Moderaterne, has long spoken a lot about international labour. It is low-hanging fruit to make sure that those just on the other side of the bridge, who actually lack work, could help us in Denmark. It would be a win-win," she says.

The Danish government declaration stresses the importance of Nordic cooperation, and so does Monika Rubin.

"We are the twelfth-largest economy in the world if we join together as the Nordic countries. And that means there is an untapped potential that we have to take much more interest in."

Police Officer Becomes Region Skåne's Director of Preparedness

For Jonas Berg, strong preparedness begins not with systems and structures but with people who know each other before a crisis hits. Region Skåne's new director of preparedness wants to use his experience from Helsingborg to strengthen relationships within Skåne's preparedness community. He also believes the Swedish will to defend must be built up through culture.



Jonas Berg took up his post as director of preparedness at Region Skåne on 14 September 2026.

One thing Jonas Berg can say with certainty about his new role as director of preparedness at Region Skåne is that he will put weight on building up his network across the region's whole preparedness system. For him it is very important to develop relationships in calm conditions, and not only once the situation has become more serious.

"Personal contacts and relationships beat structure and systems every day of the week. And that you have met under calm conditions and simply know each other. That is very important," he says.

Jonas Berg had not been in the post long when this report was published. He took up the position on 14 September 2026, and the interview was therefore conducted before he had started. That also means he cannot go into specifics about his coming duties.

"But I would say that maybe sometime in December I will start to feel a bit warmed up in the role, so that I can say something. I have made my 100-day plan, so to speak," he says.

Besides the importance of nurturing relationships in peacetime, Jonas Berg thinks preparedness and security should be able to create value in everyday life beyond military purposes, from a so-called "dual use" perspective.

"It can be something as simple as thinking: OK, should we have a shelter or not when we build a house?"

It is about integrating security and preparedness early in organisations' processes, that is, in management-team discussions, decisions and budgets. As an example, the Swedish Civil Defence and Resilience Agency has produced the handbook Inbyggd säkerhet (Built-in Security), on security in public buildings. It illustrates well how one can think in order to achieve dual use and other synergies, according to Jonas Berg.

"Dual use should always be sought in preference to solutions intended only for crisis and war," he says.

The Preparedness Field Is Taking Up More and More Space

When Øresundsinstituttet meets Jonas Berg, it is at his workplace in Helsingborg Town Hall, where at the time of the interview he is the municipality's head of security and preparedness. He has held the job for five years, and it then involved new and exciting duties.

"I thought it was super interesting; then I got a reason to learn about preparedness and civil defence."

Jonas Berg's main task in the City of Helsingborg was initially to start work on safety, crime prevention and above all the municipality's efforts against organised crime and unfair competition in the welfare system. He believes his 22 years in the police made him an attractive hire for the municipality. His duties have since increasingly come to concern preparedness.

"Back then the emphasis was perhaps 75 per cent crime prevention work and 25 per cent preparedness. Now I would say it is 50-50."

Preparedness was a completely new field for him, where conditions changed when Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, shortly after he had started the job.

"In 2022 you see how it just shoots upwards, with both money and assignments from government and state to municipalities, regions and agencies," he says.

Copenhagen

PHOTO: BY & HAVN



Nanna Westerby Jensen
New CEO of By & Havn.

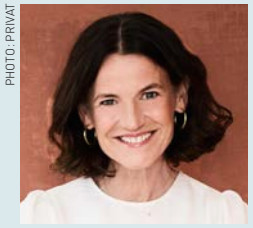


Sisse Marie Welling (SF)
Copenhagen's new Lord Mayor.



Andreas Keil (S) New Mayor for Employment, Integration and Business in Copenhagen.

PHOTO: PRIVAT



Annemarie Munk Riis
Appointed new CEO of Innovation District Copenhagen in March 2026 and took up the post on 1 June. She was previously CEO of Rådet for Bæredygtigt Byggeri.

Copenhagen



Lars Weiss Became Director of Urban Development at Urban Partners in Copenhagen, formerly Nrep, in March. He was previously Lord Mayor of Copenhagen.

Eastern Denmark



Lars Gaardhøj (S) Chair of the Regional Council of the future Region Østdanmark. He comes from the equivalent post in the Capital Region of Denmark.

PHOTO: BORGERREPRÆSENTATIONEN



Jens Gordon Clausen
Regional Director of the future Region Østdanmark. He comes from the equivalent post in the Capital Region of Denmark.

PHOTO: PRIVAT



Lisbeth Iversen Director of Regional Development at the future Region Østdanmark. Previously acting Group Director at Region Zealand.

Skåne och Malmö

PHOTO: REGION SKÅNE



Jonna Myrebris Appointed new Regional Director of Region Skåne and took up the post on 11 December. She was previously Chief of Staff and Deputy Head of Administration at Region Skåne.

PHOTO: MALMÖ STAD



Jonas Rosenkvist Appointed new City Director of the City of Malmö. He previously worked as Head of Department at the City Executive Office in Malmö.

PHOTO: BONNIER NEWS



Lena Philipson Sydsvenskan's new Editor-in-chief. She comes most recently from the equivalent post at Skånska Dagbladet.

Political Cross-Regional Cooperation

Political cross-regional cooperation in the Øresund region takes place at many levels: locally between municipalities, regionally between eastern Denmark and southern Sweden, and across a larger geography stretching down to Germany and up the Swedish west coast to Norway. Here are the most important ones.

The cooperation with the most players in the region is Greater Copenhagen, which brings together four regions and 85 municipalities. The STRING cooperation, which originated in the decision to build a fixed link between Denmark and Germany, is the geographically broadest, having grown to include Danish, German, Swedish and Norwegian stakeholders. Interreg's Öresund-Kattegat-Skagerrak programme (ÖKS), which supports a large number of cross-regional projects every year, is also a political body. Interreg was initiated by the EU to encourage cities and regions to cooperate and learn from each other across borders. In Interreg ÖKS, representatives of Sweden, Denmark and Norway choose which projects receive support, and so shape the opportunities for cooperation across the Øresund. Project participants are often municipalities and regions, which creates new contacts on the other side of the Øresund. Last but not least, there is local cooperation between Helsingborg and Elsinore, and between Malmö and Copenhagen. In both cases the municipalities have run joint projects for several years.



Jan Juul Christensen.

Greater Copenhagen

The political partnership between 46 Danish and 39 Swedish municipalities and the Capital Region of Denmark, Region Zealand, Region Skåne and Region Halland. The cooperation organisation was established in January 2016 and replaced the earlier political cooperation in Öresundskomiteen. Its aim is to promote growth, strengthen mobility and promote cross-border labour-market integration. The organisation has, among other things, adopted a traffic charter, a labour market charter and a green charter. The board has 18 members from municipalities and regions.

Managing director: Jan Juul Christensen.
Chair: Carl Johan Sonesson (M), chair of the regional board, Region Skåne.
The board's chairmanship also includes four deputy chairs: Lars Gaardhøj, chair of the regional board of the Capital Region of Denmark and of the forthcoming Region Østdanmark; Sisse Marie Welling, lord mayor of Copenhagen; Mikaela Waltersson, chair of the regional board of Region Halland; and Simon Hansen, chair of KKR Sjælland

STRING Megaregion

STRING is a political partnership between Hamburg, Kiel and Schleswig-Holstein in Germany; the Capital Region of Denmark, Region Zealand, the Region of Southern Denmark and the City of Copenhagen in Denmark; Region Skåne, the City of Malmö, the City of Helsingborg, the City of Gothenburg, Västra Götaland and Region Halland in Sweden; and the City of Oslo, Akershus County Council and Østfold County Council in Norway. The organisation has a political forum with politicians from all partners, a steering group with directors from the various partners and a contact group with representatives from civil-servant level. On 1 January 2026 STRING Megaregion was reorganised as a non-commercial Danish association with an office in Copenhagen. A new strategy is to be adopted this autumn, focusing on infrastructure and connectivity and on strengthened competitiveness.


Thomas Becker.

CEO: Thomas Becker.
Chair of the Political Forum: Sofia Hedén (S), municipal commissioner, City of Malmö.

Interreg ÖKS

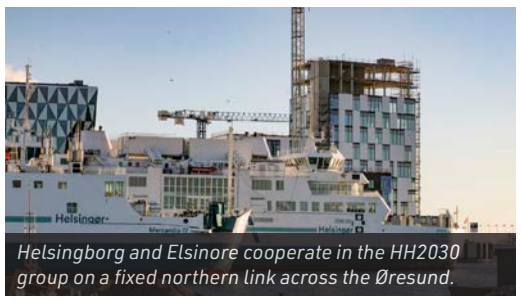
The Interreg Öresund-Kattegat-Skagerrak programme has EUR 140 million for the 2021–2027 period to support a large number of projects in four areas: innovation and entrepreneurship, a borderless labour market, green transition and transport. It has three offices, in Copenhagen, Malmö and Gothenburg, and three politically appointed committees:
Interreg steering committee Öresund. This committee decides which project applications are approved as Interreg projects and thus receive funding. The money for Interreg projects comes from the EU's European Regional Development Fund and from the Norwegian state, and funding covers 60 per cent of a project's budget.
Interreg steering committee KASK (Kattegat-Skagerrak).
Interreg surveillance committee. The committee that ensures the quality and effectiveness of Interreg projects in the Øresund region. It consists of politicians and civil servants from Denmark, Norway and Sweden.
Programme manager: Magnus Schönning



Interreg ÖKS introduces itself at Folkemødet on Bornholm.

EU-Interreg Projects across the Øresund

Cross-regional cooperation between Danish and Swedish municipalities and regions is not driven only through cooperation organisations but also in project form. Interreg projects give rise to new cooperation across the Øresund between municipalities, regions and organisations.


Helsingborg and Elsinore cooperate in the HH2030 group on a fixed northern link across the Øresund.

Helsingborg–Elsinore Cooperation

Helsingborg and Elsinore work together in the HH2030 group on a fixed link between the two towns. The group also includes representatives of the Capital Region of Denmark, Danish Transport and Logistics, Dansk Erhverv, DI Danish Construction, The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Southern Sweden and Region Skåne.

Helsingborg and Elsinore also cooperate on an ongoing basis in several areas, at both political and civil-servant level.


Copenhagen's lord mayor Sisse Marie Welling and Malmö's mayor Katrin Stjernfeldt Jammeh.

Malmö–Copenhagen Cooperation

The two biggest cities in the Øresund region have for several years had close cooperation, above all on labour market and infrastructure issues. Since both municipalities joined Greater Copenhagen and STRING, part of the cooperation takes place through those organisations. The two cities' members of the Greater Copenhagen board (Sisse Marie Welling and Katrin Stjernfeldt Jammeh) are spokespersons for the organisation's labour market charter. The two municipalities also cooperate on Interreg projects and joint events.

On several occasions Malmö and Copenhagen have run Interreg projects on the possibility of establishing an Øresund metro and, in that context, started the network Øresundsmetro Executive.

Political Cross-National Cooperation

Many national stakeholders matter for Danish-Swedish relations in the Øresund region, nationally and in the Nordic region. They include the cooperation ministers, the ambassadors, the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The Nordic Council

Each parliament in the Nordic countries elects representatives to the Nordic Council. In total the council has 87 elected members. They meet twice a year to discuss various topics that concern Nordic citizens. The Nordic Council has five standing committees, covering among other things knowledge and culture, growth and development, and sustainability. The presidency of the council rotates between the countries and lasts one year at a time.
President: in 2026 Ville Väyrynen, Finland
Council director: Kristina Háfoss

The Nordic Council of Ministers

The Nordic Council of Ministers was founded in 1971 and is a political cooperation body for the governments of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, as well as Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland. There are eleven councils of ministers in which the various subject ministers meet, plus a council of ministers for the cooperation ministers. The secretariat is in Copenhagen. The presidency rotates between the five countries and lasts one year at a time. In practice it is the Nordic cooperation ministers who coordinate the cooperation on the prime ministers' behalf, and it is coordinated on an ongoing basis by the Nordic Committee for Cooperation. The Nordic Council of Ministers has a vision of the Nordic region being the world's most sustainable and integrated region by 2030.
Chairs: in 2026 Denmark's prime minister, Mette Frederiksen, and the Faroese prime minister, Aksel V. Johannesen. Norway takes over the presidency in 2027.
Secretary General: Karen Ellemann

The Nordic Freedom of Movement Council

An independent body under the Nordic Council of Ministers that aims to get border obstacle issues onto the national and Nordic agendas. The council was established in 2014 and aims to promote free movement by helping to solve border obstacles between the Nordic countries, prevent new ones from arising and increase and streamline information efforts. The council has one member each from Denmark, Finland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Åland. Its presidency follows that of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Swedish member is Anders Ahnlid and the Danish member is Karsten Lauritzen.
Chairs: Karsten Lauritzen (Denmark) and John Johannessen (Faroe Islands) are chairs in 2026.

Greater Copenhagen Task Force

A forum for Danish-Swedish cooperation across the Øresund, created in 2021. It then consisted of representatives of Greater Copenhagen, the Danish and Swedish Nordic ministers, the countries' ambassadors, Danish Industry (DI), the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Southern Sweden and Øresundsbron. In 2023 Confederation of Swedish Enterprise also joined the Greater Copenhagen Task Force.



Sweden's ambassador in Denmark: Hans Wallmark took up his post in August 2024. Sweden has eight consulates in Denmark, plus one in Greenland and one in the Faroe Islands.



PHOTO: UDENRIGSMINISTERIET

Denmark's ambassador in Sweden: Jens Kisling took up his post in September 2025. Denmark has 15 consulates in Sweden.



Minister for Nordic Cooperation in Denmark: Monika Rubin (M) is also minister for social affairs and took up her post in June 2026.



PHOTO: THOMAS TOLSTRUP

Chair of the Nordic Freedom of Movement Council: Denmark's Karsten Lauritzen shares the chairmanship in 2026 with John Johannessen from the Faroe Islands.

Networking Organisations and Meeting Places

Several networking organisations and meeting places bring stakeholders together across the Swedish-Danish border.

The Danish-Swedish Chamber of Commerce

Founded in March 2024 by the Danish Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Southern Sweden. Its focus is on strengthening trade, investment, mobility and competitiveness across the Øresund and, in a broader perspective, between Denmark and Sweden. In 2026 its work has been directed, among other things, at turning this into concrete areas of action such as labour market and mobility, and infrastructure and transport. A mapping of the rules and procedures that make it hard to work, recruit and run businesses across the Øresund is under way.
Secretary General: Marc Perera Christensen, regional director, The Danish Chamber of Commerce.
Secretary General: Marc Perera Christensen, regional director,The Danish Chamber of Commerce.

Medicon Valley Alliance

A triple-helix (cooperation between universities, state and industry) network organisation focused on the life science industry. It organises conferences and networking meetings and provides information about the life science industry in Sweden and Denmark.
CEO: Anette Steenberg
Chair: Niels Abel Bonde, Corporate Vice President HCP Marketing Obesity, Novo Nordisk

Fehmarn Belt Business Council

A network organisation for business organisations in the Hamburg, Lübeck, eastern Denmark and Skåne areas, including the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Southern Sweden, Danish Industry and The Danish Chamber of Commerce. Its aims include exploiting the potential of the forthcoming fixed link between Denmark and Germany.
Chair: Philip Koch, Hamburg Chamber of Commerce

CPH Advisory Committee

A committee whose aim is to bring together strong regional players from politics and business who can identify ideas and initiatives to strengthen Copenhagen Airport in international competition through continued route growth and improved international accessibility. Because the airport's development matters to both southern Sweden and Denmark, the committee's members come from both countries.
Chair: Jens Kramer Mikkelsen, former lord mayor of Copenhagen, director of urban development at Urban Partners.

HH2030 Group / HH Group

A network working to promote a decision to establish a fixed Øresund link between Helsingborg and Elsinore. It has around 40 members and a steering group with players from the City of Helsingborg, Elsinore Municipality, the Capital Region of Denmark, Region Skåne and the business organisations Danish Transport and Logistics (DTL), Dansk Erhverv, DI Danish Construction and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Southern Sweden.
Chair: Erik Østergaard, CEO of Danish Transport and Logistics.

Meetings on Social Media

Facebook groups of interest to commuters and others:
- Job i Kbh og omegn has 61,600 members
- Jobb i Öresundsregionen has 21,400 members
- Svensk i Köpenhamn has 13,300 members
- Pendlargruppen BroenLive has 12,300 members
- Pendler Øresund has 9,300 members

Other groups: Øresundspendler – I klemme mellem 2 lande, Øresundspendler i bil, Jobb i Danmark, Dansker i Malmö, Dansk i Malmö, Danskere i Sverige.

Øresund Regional Border Obstacles Forum

The Øresund Regional Border Obstacles Forum is a network led by Øresunddirekt. Together with representatives of, among others, Greater Copenhagen, The Norden Association, the Nordic Council of Ministers, Øresundsinstituttet, Danske Torpare and Øresundsadvokater, it discusses shared challenges and possible solutions to border obstacles.



A Friends of Executive meeting at Hotel d'Angleterre in Copenhagen in April 2025.

Danish-Swedish Meeting Places for Business

There are several meeting places and networks for companies working across the Øresund. The Swedish ambassador's residence in Copenhagen is an important meeting place. Øresundsbro Konsortiet invites guests to the annual Øresund Talks, and Øresundsinstituttet organises a series of meetings, including Real Estate Øresund, the Øresund Conference One Market, the Denmark-Sweden Summit at TechBBQ and the Danish-Swedish Innovation Day, the latter in cooperation with Ørestad Innovation City Copenhagen. There are also three more formalised networks: Öresundsgruppen, Alumni Öresund Network and Friends of Executive.

Öresundsgruppen was founded in 1999 and is an informal meeting place for people active in business and politics on both sides of the Øresund. "The aim has been simply to connect people, to hear something interesting from a speaker, share a good meal and get to know new people," says its initiator, Peter Enggaard.

Two larger meetings have been held in 2026. In January there was a meeting with SAS at Hotel d'Angleterre in Copenhagen, where CEO and Group President Anko van der Werff described the airline's offensive with Kastrup as its hub. In May there was a meeting on Gastrodiplomacy, with the meal provided by the Michelin restaurant PM & Vänner of Växjö at the Swedish ambassador's residence in Copenhagen.

Öresundsgruppen will soon hold what it calls an "ØRåd". "We will then evaluate what Öresundsgruppen has been, what it is today and how its activities should in future be arranged in terms of content and organisation," says Peter Enggaard, noting that in 2026 relations and integration across the Øresund look different from when the group was formed in 1999. Contacts across the Øresund are becoming ever more intensive. Integration is strengthening. Is the same type of cooperation still needed, or something entirely different?

Friends of Executive creates meeting places for business leaders across the Øresund, from larger CEO gatherings and conferences to smaller forums.

"Friends has historically had its centre of gravity on the Swedish side, and we have a relatively limited share of Danish companies and business leaders in the network," says CEO Jimmy Oldén, who started the network in 2014.

More recently, however, its meeting places in Denmark have expanded to include Hotel d'Angleterre in Copenhagen, Rox Resort in Køge and Hotel Marienlyst in Elsinore.

Alumni Öresund Network consists of people personally invited from business, mainly owners, chairs, CEOs and group presidents. Danes make up about 35 per cent. Alumni was founded in Stockholm in 1990, while the Danish-Swedish network was started in 2004.

"We invite people to a Christmas lunch and annually to the Alumni Öresund Spring Summit, usually in May," says Lars Navéus, partner and head of the Öresund network.

Gate 21

A partnership between the Capital Region of Denmark, Region Zealand, knowledge institutions, a number of municipalities and companies in Greater Copenhagen to promote green transition. The network has mainly Danish players, but Innovation Skåne is also a partner.
Director: Sofus Rex
Chair: Steen Christiansen, chair of the municipal cooperation KKR Hovedstaden.



Helle Ahlenius Pallesen

Øresundsadvokater

An association of around 90 lawyers who can provide legal advice on Danish-Swedish matters. It is also a network for lawyers interested in legal issues connected to the Øresund region, and it organises various seminars.
Director: Helle Ahlenius Pallesen.
Chair: Viktor Gustafsson, MAQS Advokatbyrå Malmö KB

Øresundsmetro Executive

A forum with representatives of Copenhagen and Malmö and of business and academia on both sides of the Øresund. It was started in connection with the cities' interest in a metro, the Øresund Metro. Activity is at a low ebb, but Malmö is in dialogue with the members, who are called on at conferences and panel discussions. There are plans to increase activity.
Chair: Leif Jakobsson, former state secretary at the Ministry of Finance and member of the Swedish Parliament.

Swedish-Danish Friendship Group

A network run by four Skåne members of the Swedish Parliament: Peter Ollén (M), Ewa Pihl Krabbe (S), Danish-born Niels Paarup-Petersen (C) and Hanna Gunnarsson (V). The group works closely with the Danish embassy in Sweden and organises, among other things, seminars in the Swedish Parliament, this autumn an energy meeting with Sweden's Vattenfall and Denmark's Ørsted, information about the Greenland agreement and continued discussions on IT and AI.
Chair: Peter Ollén (Moderaterna)

Knowledge

To promote mobility in the Øresund region and in the Nordic region, several organisations work to inform people about relevant rules and to produce analyses and facts about the region.

Øresunddirekt

An information service where citizens and companies can get help understanding the rules for living, working, studying or doing business on the other side of the Øresund. Øresunddirekt Danmark is responsible for the websites, and Øresunddirekt Sverige is a cooperation between the Swedish Tax Agency, the Swedish Public Employment Service, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency and the Skåne County Administrative Board, with a physical information centre in Malmö.
Head of operations, Sweden: Malin Dahl
Head of operations, Denmark: Ylva Hansson

Info Norden

The Nordic Council of Ministers' information service, which helps people who move, work or study, or who want to run a business, in one of the Nordic countries or autonomous areas. It has a website and an office in each country. Info Norden also organises various information activities focused on mobility in the Nordic region. In addition, Info Norden is to map and highlight border obstacles.

Øresundsinstituttet

An independent Danish-Swedish knowledge centre formed as a non-profit association in 2002 to increase knowledge of and contacts across the Øresund. It functions as the Øresund region's analysis house, with recurring reports such as State of the Region and Øresundsindex, and analyses for Greater Copenhagen. Øresundsinstituttet also runs the Øresund region's broadest Danish-Swedish network and the news agency News Øresund. The association is run without a profit motive and is funded by just over a hundred members, including Danish and Swedish ministries and departments, regions, municipalities, private companies, organisations and universities.
CEO: Johan Wessman
Chair: Jens Kramer Mikkelsen, Director of Urban Development at Urban Partners.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure is a foundation of the cross-regional region, and with the Øresund Bridge the Danish-Swedish region gained a new unifying force. Investment in future infrastructure is important for the region's development, so the public companies that own and run the infrastructure are of interest for cross-border cooperation. The region is also home to the world's only port company owned by two countries: Copenhagen Malmö Port. It is a good example of Danish-Swedish cooperation.

Sund & Bælt Holding A/S

The Danish state-owned infrastructure company that owns the subsidiaries A/S Øresund, Femern A/S, A/S Storebælt, Sund & Bælt Partner A/S, A/S Femern Landanlæg, Brobizz A/S and Brobizz Operatør A/S.
CEO: Mikkel Hemmingsen
Chair: Michael Rasmussen

Femern A/S

The company is responsible for planning, building and later owning and operating the fixed Fehmarn Belt link between Denmark and Germany. The link itself is financed by the Danish state, and the land works are financed by the Danish and German states. The tunnel will be 18 kilometres long and take about ten minutes to drive through by car and seven minutes by train.
CEO: Janne Dyrlev
Chair: Mikkel Hemmingsen

A/S Femern Landanlæg

The company is responsible for establishing and carrying out the Danish land works for the Fehmarn Belt link and is owned by Sund & Bælt.
CEO: Janne Dyrlev
Chair: Mikkel Hemmingsen

A/S Øresund

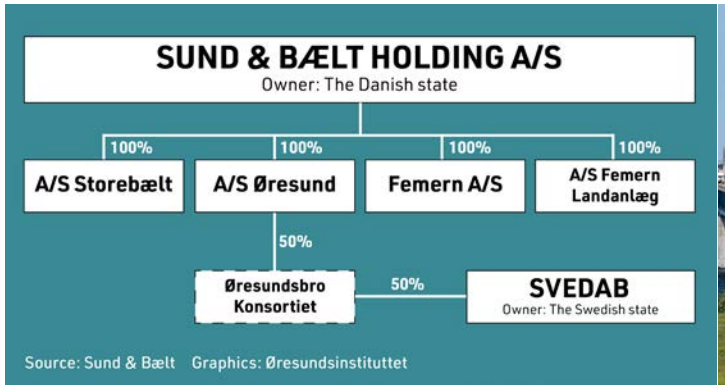
The Danish state-owned company that owns half of Øresundsbro Konsortiet and owns, operates and maintains the Øresund Motorway and the Øresund Line on the Danish side of the Øresund Bridge. It is owned by Sund & Bælt.
CEO: Janne Dyrlev
Chair: Mikkel Hemmingsen

Svedab – Svensk-danska broförbindelsen

The Swedish state-owned company formed when the Øresund Bridge was to be built, which owns the Swedish part of the land works together with A/S Øresund and Øresundsbro Konsortiet.
CEO: Lars-Erik Fredriksson
Chair: Lars Ljungälv

Øresundsbro Konsortiet

The company that owns and operates the Øresund Bridge. The consortium is owned by the Danish and Swedish states through Sund & Bælt Holding A/S via A/S Øresund and Svedab AB.
CEO: Linus Eriksson
Chair: Jørn Tolstrup Rohde





Öresundståg AB

The Øresund train system is a cooperation between six southern Swedish transport companies and the Danish Civil Aviation and Railway Authority, established to create a joint traffic system for operating Øresund trains in Denmark and southern Sweden. The trains are run by VR Sverige, and Öresundståg AB coordinates the services. Öresundståg AB is owned by Region Skåne and the counties of Blekinge, Kronoberg, Västra Götaland, Halland and Kalmar. Under an agreement between the Danish Ministry of Transport and Region Skåne, responsibility for procurement and operation of Øresund train services on the Danish side rest with Skånetrafiken.
CEO: Mark Fenzel
Chair: Carina Zachau (M), chair of Region Skåne's public transport committee.

VR Sverige (formerly Arriva Sverige)

In December 2025 the Finnish state-owned company VR Sverige AB took over as operator of Øresund train services. VR has previously been the operator of the Pågatåg services in southern Sweden. VR Sverige was formerly called Arriva Sverige but changed its name when Finland's state-owned transport company VR Group bought the company in 2022.
CEO: Janne Hattula
Chair: Elisa Markula (group CEO, VR Group)

By & Havn

By & Havn is Copenhagen's development company. It was founded under the name Arealudviklingsselskabet I/S when Ørestadsselskabet, Frederiksbergbaneselskabet and Københavns Havn were wound up, but changed to its present name in 2008. The City of Copenhagen owns 95 per cent and the state 5 per cent of the company. The largest development areas in Copenhagen are Ørestad, Nordhavnen, Sydhavnstippen and Prøvestenen. The artificial peninsula Lynetteholm at the entrance to Copenhagen's harbour is also being developed.
CEO: Nanna Westerby Jensen
Chair: Pia Gjellerup

Copenhagen Malmö Port

The joint operating company for Copenhagen's and Malmö's ports was established as a single company in 2001 and includes, among other things, large container terminals, bulk cargo, ro-ro facilities and cruise facilities, the latter also in Visby on Gotland. By & Havn owns 50 per cent of CMP, the City of Malmö owns 45.9 per cent and private companies own the remaining 4.1 per cent.
CEO: Kristian Durhuus
Chair: Claus Juhl



Öresundslinjen

Öresundslinjen is owned by the Danish Molslinjen and runs ferry services between Helsingborg and Elsinore, aimed partly at passenger and leisure travel and partly at transport of cars, buses, and lorries and vans. Öresundslinjen was formerly called Forsea and before that HH Ferries, and then sailed under the brand Scandlines Helsingborg-Helsingør. Three of Öresundslinjen's ferries are now electric, with large batteries that are fast-charged in port. Molslinjen is a Swedish-owned Danish shipping company that bought Forsea at the end of 2022. See more below.
CEO: Carsten Jensen
Chair: Niels Smedegaard

Bornholmslinjen/Molslinjen

Molslinjen is a Swedish-owned Danish shipping company that became known for the ferry line of the same name between Zealand and Jutland. Since 2018 Molslinjen has operated ferry services between Ystad in Skåne and Rønne on Bornholm on the Bornholmslinjen route. Bornholmslinjen also runs ferry services between Rønne and Køge, and between Bornholm and Germany. Molslinjen has its head office in Aarhus and also operates several other ferry lines in Denmark, as well as owning and operating the Öresundslinjen route between Helsingborg and Elsinore. Since 2020 Molslinjen has been owned by the private equity company EQT, linked to the Swedish Wallenberg sphere, and its fund EQT Infrastructure. EQT also owns the Norwegian shipping company Torghatten, and the shipping companies in Denmark and Norway have been placed under the Norwegian holding company Nordic Ferry Infrastructure, NFI.
CEO: Carsten Jensen
Chair: Stein Andre Herigstad-Olsen





130 Danes and Swedes took over the dance floor at Kulturværftet in Elsinore when the first Øresund Ball was held in March 2026. The event was organised by Kulturværftet and Nordisk Dans.

Culture & Cooperation

Several organisations work for greater cultural exchange and contact between Sweden and Denmark.

Dansk-Svensk Kulturfond

The foundation was established in 1981 with the aim of increasing knowledge of Swedish art and culture in Denmark, and thereby strengthening cultural exchange between the countries. Each year the fund awards a prize to a Swede or Dane whose artistry has helped increase understanding between the countries..
Chair: Catharine Lefebvre

Svensk-Danska kulturfonden

The foundation, which has existed since 1953, works to support cultural cooperation between Sweden and Denmark. It gives grants primarily to projects connected to science, literature and art, but also supports other projects whose purpose is to increase knowledge of the countries and which promote the making of contacts..
Chair: Helle Ahlenius Pallesen

Fondet for Dansk-Svensk Samarbejde

The fund was established by the Danish state in 1959 with the aim of contributing to greater understanding between Denmark and Sweden and promoting cooperation.
The fund provides financial support to, among others, Swedish and Danish citizens undertaking work or study stays in the other country, or conducting scientific work of shared interest to both countries.
Chair: Pernille Vigsø Bagge

Nord 55°

Nord 55° is an association whose aim is to strengthen the Nordic public sphere and democracy with partners such as the Nordic Culture Fund, Have Kommunikation and the Norden Association. The association has five Nordic media partners: Denmark's JP/Politikens Hus, Norway's Amedia, Sweden's Bonnier News, Finland's Konstsamfundet and Greenland's Sermitsiaq.
Chair: Stig Kirk Ørskov, CEO of the World Association of Publishers

Skånes konstfrämjande: Danish Gallery Owners Bussed to Skåne

In connection with Malmö's gallery night on 25 September, Skånes konstfrämjande organised a bus trip for Danish gallery owners and Scanian art gallery directors and curators. Five Malmö galleries were visited, and the aim was to make more contacts across the Øresund in the art world.

Several Collaborations Between Elsinore and Helsingborg

Cultural cooperation in the northern Øresund is growing. In March 130 Danes and Swedes danced at an Øresund Ball at Kulturværftet in Elsinore, in cooperation with Nordisk Dans.

"We also have recurring collaborations with Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra, The Tivoli and Dunkers kulturhus in Helsingborg. They concern, among other things, audience mobilisation of young and old across the Øresund," says Søs Krog Vikkelsøe, head of Kulturværftet.

Two other collaborations concern the Music School in Elsinore, which is in dialogue with the symphony orchestra in Helsingborg, and Kulturværftet's BGK Artlab and the Art School (Billedskolen), which have an exchange with the culture school at Dunkers kulturhus.

Universities

With 13 universities and university branches, plus Swedish university colleges, in the Øresund region, the conditions for academic cooperation are good. Formal Danish-Swedish cooperation can be found in the following research facilities and centres.

ESS (European Spallation Source ERIC)

A European research facility being built outside Lund, with a data centre at DTU Lyngby Campus outside Copenhagen. At the facility, which is expected to open in 2028, researchers can study various materials with neutron sources, and it can be used for everything from medical research to archaeology.
Director General: Jane Hvolbæk Nielsen

Centre for Öresund Region Studies

A network organisation at Lund University that brings together researchers and other players around various themes concerning the Øresund region, Sweden and Denmark, and border issues and transnational regions. The organisation arranges seminars and workshops, publishes books and journals, and conducts research.
Chair: Hans Dam Christensen, professor at the Department of Communication, University of Copenhagen.
Föreståndare: Anders Lund Hansen, associate professor at the Department of Human Geography, Lund University.

Centre for Modern European Studies (CEMES)

A research centre on European issues, covering everything from politics to philosophy and literature, run by three Øresund universities: Lund University, Malmö University and the University of Copenhagen, where it is physically located.
Chair: Morten Rasmussen, University of Copenhagen.

SweDen Student

A Swedish network at Copenhagen Business School (CBS) that aims to promote the relationship between Swedish students at CBS and Swedish business. The organisation arranges, among other things, company events and works to provide information about internships and job opportunities in both Sweden and Denmark.
Chair: Tyra Wiklund



European Spallation Source (ESS) in Lund is expected to be put into operation in 2028.

PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONS

A Danish-Swedish Research and Innovation Region

13 **universities, university branches and Swedish university colleges are located in the Øresund region.**

Examples of innovation environments and research infrastructure in the Øresund region.

BIOINNOVATION INSTITUTE
Copenhagen

BLOXHUB - NORDIC HUB FOR SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION
Copenhagen

DTU SCIENCE PARK
DTU SKYLAB
FUTUREBOX
Lyngby and Hørsholm

DTU RISØ CAMPUS
Roskilde

EIT URBAN MOBILITY'S INNOVATION NORTH HUB
Copenhagen

ESS DATA MANAGEMENT AND SOFTWARE CENTER, DMSC
Lyngby

GREATER COPENHAGEN EUROPEAN DIGITAL INNOVATION HUB, GC EDIH
Copenhagen

HEALTH TECH HUB COPENHAGEN
Copenhagen

NATO DIANA QUANTUM CENTRE
Copenhagen

NIRAS GREEN TECH HUB
Allerød

SYMBION
Copenhagen

UCPH LIGHTHOUSE
Copenhagen

KALUNDBORG SYMBIOSIS
Kalundborg



KRINOVA SCIENCE PARK
Kristianstad

E-COMMERCE PARK
Helsingborg

HETCH
Helsingborg

PARKEN
Helsingborg

RECOLAB
Helsingborg

RECO PARK
Helsingborg

BIOTECH HEIGHTS
Lund

EUROPEAN SPALLATION SOURCE
Lund

FUTURE BY LUND
Lund

IDEON SCIENCE PARK
Lund

LU INNOVATION LU SAMVERKAN
Lund

MAX IV
Lund

MEDICON VILLAGE
Lund

SMILE VENTURE HUB
Lund

GAME HABITAT
Malmö

MEDEON SCIENCE PARK
Malmö

MINC
Malmö

Part IV

HISTORY & REFERENCES

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- About the Report
- References



HISTORY

The Development of the Øresund Region

2032

The German land works that will connect road and rail to the Fehmarn Belt tunnel are delayed and may be completed in 2032 at the earliest. The land works include a new railway and a tunnel between the island of Fehmarn and the German mainland.

The 2030s

The Fehmarn Belt tunnel between Denmark and Germany was meant to open in 2029, but the schedule is not holding. One reason is that the specialist vessel IVY, which will be used to lower the tunnel's concrete elements, was two years late. A new timetable is expected once the first six of 89 tunnel elements have been lowered to the seabed.

2027

Region Østdanmark is formed through a merger of Region Zealand and the Capital Region of Denmark. The new region covers 46 per cent of Denmark's inhabitants, and the change is a result of the Danish healthcare reform.

2026

Skåne's County Governor Peter Danielsson is tasked by the government with investigating how the Swedish share of the Øresund Bridge's future profits can best be used for new infrastructure in Skåne.

New records for traffic and commuting across the Øresund. Never before have so many people commuted across the Øresund. In the first quarter an average of 23,177 people commuted, just over 96 per cent of them from Sweden to eastern Denmark. The number of passenger journeys by car, train and ferry across the Øresund also set new records. In the first half of the year an average of 107,331 passenger journeys were made across the Øresund each day.

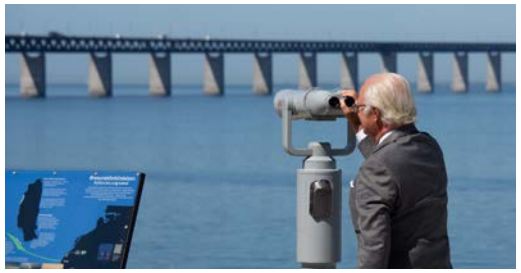
Greater Copenhagen, the political cooperation between four regions and 85 municipalities in eastern Denmark and southern Sweden, turns ten.

The Queen Margrethe II Bridge between Falster and Zealand opens to road traffic in March. Rail traffic is expected to start in 2027. The bridge replaces the Storstrøm Bridge, and its rail section is part of the Danish land works for the Fehmarn Belt tunnel.

The final stage of Hovedstadens Letbane is completed. The tram line from north to south in western Copenhagen is thus fully built. The first stage opened in October 2025.

A new platform for passenger trains opens at Copenhagen Airport in April. It is part of the Fehmarn Belt corridor.

2025



The Øresund Bridge turns 25 on 1 July, as do the Øresund trains and the information service Øresunddirekt. As part of the anniversary celebrations the Danish and Swedish royal couples meet on either side of the bridge, and the Danish and Swedish prime ministers sign the "Declaration between Sweden and Denmark on the 25th Anniversary of the Øresund Bridge".

2024

A Danish healthcare reform is decided in November. The reform means Region Zealand and the Capital Region of Denmark merge into Region Østdanmark in 2027.

The Øresund Agreement, the tax treaty between Denmark and Sweden, is updated. It now also covers public sector employees, and home working is made easier for Øresund commuters. The agreement takes effect on 1 January 2025.

The Nordic common labour market turns 70. The 1954 agreement means Nordic citizens have the right to settle in another Nordic country without a work permit.

Sweden becomes a full member of NATO.

2023

Denmark's border controls on Sweden are abolished in May. For a short period in August, after an increased security threat to Sweden and Denmark, Denmark reintroduces border controls and Sweden strengthens its own. The Danish controls are removed again, while the Swedish ones remain.

2022

Sweden applies for NATO membership, which is expected to strengthen defence cooperation with, among others, Denmark.

Denmark and Sweden agree on a transit declaration under which travellers to and from Bornholm, and to and from Copenhagen Airport, are to be exempted if Sweden or Denmark should in future close the border or introduce travel restrictions for any reason.

Skånetrafiken takes over responsibility from DSB in December for the contracted Øresund train services in Denmark.

2021

The Greater Copenhagen Task Force meets for the first time. It is a cooperation format that brings together national, regional and local perspectives in discussions between the countries' cooperation ministers, the leadership of Greater Copenhagen, business organisations, Øresundsbron and the countries' ambassadors.

2020

Construction work on the Fehmarn Belt link begins on the Danish side. In Germany it begins the following year.

The border between Denmark and Sweden is closed periodically in 2020–22 because of the risk of infection during the coronavirus pandemic. Exceptions are made for cross-border commuters and some other groups.

2019

A new Danish law takes effect in January, aimed at making Danish business promotion more efficient. The new law means the Danish regions may no longer work on business development and tourism.

The first high-speed railway for 250 km/h in Denmark opens in early summer. It runs between Copenhagen and Ringsted on the way towards the forthcoming Fehmarn Belt tunnel, but also towards the Great Belt Bridge.

In February the German authorities approve construction of the Fehmarn Belt tunnel.



Cityringen in Copenhagen opens in the autumn with 17 new metro stations. The following year the branch to Nordhavn is planned to be completed, and in 2024 a Sydhavn line.

In November Denmark introduces border controls on Sweden in order to combat cross-border crime.

2018

An agreement from August between the Danish Ministry of Transport and Region Skåne means responsibility for all Øresund train services is transferred to Skånetrafiken.

2017

The Swedish ID checks at the Øresund end in May 2017, which brings journey times for rail travellers closer to normal.

A fixed link between Helsingborg and Elsinore is to be investigated in the form of an Interreg project with the Swedish and Danish states. The initiative is accompanied by joint work on traffic forecasts.

2016

Sweden decides to supplement the border controls on Swedish soil with a carrier liability requirement, which entails ID checks on the Danish side. Journey times for Øresund commuters by train are extended.

The Danish-Swedish political cooperation Öresundskomiteen is transformed into The Greater Copenhagen and

Skåne Committee. Besides the name change, all 79 municipalities and three regions in the Øresund region are now included.

Germany's and Denmark's transport ministers confirm their joint support for a fixed Fehmarn Belt link.

The MAX IV research facility in Lund is inaugurated.

2015

The future European Spallation Source, ESS, becomes Scandinavia's first ERIC, a European consortium with Sweden and Denmark as host countries.

As a result of the large number of refugees, Sweden introduces temporary border controls between Denmark and Sweden in November. A side effect is that Danish and Swedish Øresund commuters, especially those travelling by train, face longer journey times between home and work.

2014

The Nordic Council of Ministers establishes the Nordic Freedom of Movement Council, whose task is to promote mobility between the Nordic countries.

2012

The remnants of Øresund University and Øresund Science Region, Øresund University Network, are shut down.

Metro cooperation between Copenhagen and Malmö begins, with the aim of building the Øresund Metro.

2011

The Danish and Swedish states withdraw their contributions to Øresund University and Øresund Science Region, and it is decided that the cooperation will continue on a smaller scale under the name Øresund University Network.

Malmö Arena is one of the venues for the men's World Handball Championship. It marks the start of several World and European Championships in which Malmö Arena serves as home ground for Denmark.

2010

Øresund Entrepreneurship Academy is closed down.

The flow of migration across the Øresund turns, and the majority now move from Skåne to eastern Denmark.

The portal Øresunddirekt Business opens with information for companies.

The Citytunnel in Malmö opens with the new stations Triangeln and Hyllie.

2009

Denmark and Sweden succeed in winning support for placing the European neutron research facility European Spallation Source (ESS) in Lund and the associated data centre in Copenhagen.

2008

A state treaty between Denmark and Germany on establishing a fixed link across the Fehmarn Belt is signed

The Nordic Border Obstacles Forum is founded.

Øresund Network is shut down.

2007

Copenhagen's metro line to the airport opens.

2006

Øresund Entrepreneurship Academy is established as an organisation under Øresund University to promote entrepreneurship at the universities.

2003

The Øresund Agreement, a joint tax treaty between Sweden and Denmark for Øresund commuters, is signed. Under the agreement, commuters pay tax in the country where they work.

The second and third stages of Copenhagen's metro open.

Funding of Øresunddirekt goes from coming solely from the Danish and Swedish states to being contributed to by more players, such as authorities and regions.

2002

The first stage of Copenhagen's metro opens, with stops including in the new district of Ørestad.

Øresundsinstituttet is established, a Danish-Swedish knowledge centre, producing analyses and facts about the region.

2001

Copenhagen Port and Malmö Port are merged into a joint port operator, Copenhagen Malmö Port.

Øresund Science Region opens. This is a parallel cooperation to Øresund University, focused on involving the public and private sectors.

2000



The Øresund Bridge opens on 1 July and Øresund train services begin. Before that an open bridge event was held, in which 80,000 people cycled, ran or walked across the bridge.

Øresund Network is established. Its main focus is to develop the Øresund brand and spread awareness of the area.

Øresunddirekt is established. It is a public information centre that provides information about the labour market and about tax and social rules for Øresund commuters and companies.

1997

The Øresund region's first cross-national cluster organisation is established in the form of Medicon Valley Alliance, with the aim of strengthening life science and pharmaceutical companies in the Øresund region.

Øresund University is established with nine universities.

Crossborder Øresund partnership is established.

1995

Work on the coast-to-coast link across the Øresund begins in August with dredging.

1993

Öresundskomiteen is formed as a political cooperation organisation out of the earlier organisations the Øresund Council and Öresundskontakt. Öresundskomiteen is to provide the platform for the new region across the Øresund.

Work on the Danish land works begins on 16 September and covers 9 kilometres of motorway and 18 kilometres of railway.

1991

The Danish and Swedish governments sign an agreement in March to build a fixed link across the Øresund.

Øresundsbro Konsortiet, which is to own and operate the Øresund Bridge, is established. It is owned half by each country.

1984

Öresundskontakt is formed as a cross-border forum to strengthen contacts across the Øresund and prepare public opinion for a fixed link. The organisation brings together municipalities, regions and business, and acts as an early catalyst for cross-border cooperation.

1965



PHOTO: KALMAR LÄNS MUSEUM

Services with hydrofoils begin between Malmö and Copenhagen. The shorter journey time makes it possible to commute to work across the Øresund.

1964

The Øresund Council is formed as a cooperation body between around thirty Swedish and Danish municipalities, together with Danish counties (amt) and Swedish county councils (landsting).

1819

On 23 May the British paddle steamer Caledonia begins the first modern steamship service between Malmö and Copenhagen.

About the Report

The purpose of this report is to give an overview of developments in current cooperation and activities across the Øresund and between Denmark and Sweden, and to some extent within the Nordic region and down towards the Fehmarn Belt. The report also includes an overview of relevant organisations and a history of the development of the Øresund region. The report is based on extensive research and fact-gathering, and on interviews with relevant people.

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Øresundsinstituttet has been in contact with representatives of several of the cross-regional organisations presented in the report to obtain information. The information was gathered in September–October 2026.

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The Øresund Bridge



Cross-Border Commuting across Øresund with Young People in Focus

ØRESUNDS INSTITUTTET

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