



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Global Ireland **A Strategy for the Nordic Region**

Delivering for Ireland in the Nordic
Region to 2025

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Stockholm, Sweden. © Getty Images



Vision

Ireland will build on the strong foundations of our relationship with our Nordic neighbours, promoting our shared values to increase our influence and impact in the region.

We will work with Nordic countries towards a safer, more just and sustainable future, supporting international peace and security and the rules-based international order.

Our activism within the United Nations (UN), and membership of the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA) will drive cooperation, as will bilateral political, economic, cultural, and people-to-people exchanges and partnerships. Ireland will deepen research and scientific collaboration with the region and promote innovation and entrepreneurship to deliver on our objectives.

Context

‘Global Ireland: Ireland’s Global Footprint to 2025’ aims to double Ireland’s impact and influence in the world by 2025. The widening and deepening of our unique relationships with our Nordic neighbours is an integral part of that ambition. This Nordic Strategy focuses on enhanced bilateral and multilateral engagement with Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden and regional bodies over the next four years.

The population of the Nordic countries totals 27 million. It is a prosperous region with GDP per capita far exceeding the EU average. The Nordics are important export markets and economies that foster significant levels of entrepreneurship, innovation, and scientific research. As we face into a crucial decade in addressing the climate crisis, particularly in the post-COVID-19 world, we have both the responsibility and opportunity to work with our Nordic partners in promoting an economic model that is sustainable and consistent with an imperative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Nordic countries are natural partners for Ireland in promoting a ‘green reset’ both within the EU and internationally.

Today, we enjoy strong partnerships with each of the Nordic countries. Like Ireland, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway are relatively small countries, with ambitions on the global stage. We share a strong commitment to human rights, to gender equality, to open economies, to innovation and to education. Along with Ireland, the Nordic countries all rank near the top of the United Nations Human Development Index. We have many shared strengths and have much to learn from one another.

Strategic Objectives

To deliver on the ambition of 'Global Ireland: Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025' and the vision for our relations with the Nordic region, we will pursue the following five strategic objectives:



1

Ireland will work with Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway to advance and safeguard shared interests and values across the world, including in the UN and via European partnerships.

We will build a collective voice for a more secure, just, fair, and sustainable world.

We will further deepen **bilateral relationships and our multilateral commitment** and cooperation with the Nordic states; enhance mutual understanding of national priorities; and broaden the space for joint initiatives.

In many key EU policy areas, from Brexit to the EU budget, to the Digital Agenda, we are closely aligned with the Nordic EU states in our perspective and priorities, as we are with Norway and Iceland as members of the European Economic Area.

In a rapidly evolving international environment, where many of these values are being called into question, it is more important than ever to stand united in defence of these shared values. Working together, we can amplify our voice on the world stage.



Minister Coveney and Norwegian Foreign Minister Ine Eriksen Sørreide at Iveagh House in 2019. Ireland and Norway are working in close partnership as fellow members of the UN Security Council for the 2021-22 term. © Phil Behan / DFA



BUILDING ON A STRONG BASE, WE WILL:

- » Forge stronger relations through a sustained programme of high-level political visits to and from the region, once international travel conditions allow. Promote and cultivate engagements and consultations across Government (including in matters of finance, environment, climate mitigation and adaptation, energy, health, justice, and defence) at political and official level between Ireland and the Nordic countries.
- » Build links with the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers particularly in areas such as children and youth affairs, the environment and climate, energy, sustainable development, research, gender equality, disability and digitalisation.
- » As well as applying for Observer status to the Arctic Council, we will enhance Ireland's engagement on Arctic and Ocean issues across the range of established fora, including through the OSPAR (Oslo and Paris) Commission, the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission and support for the Network of Arctic Researchers in Ireland (NARI).
- » Launch several new initiatives with Nordic countries collectively or individually to promote the digital agenda, scientific research and collaboration, excellence in innovation, sustainability and economic competitiveness.
- » Identify areas of collaboration and learning in terms of sustainable carbon-neutral cities.
- » Initiate new links, and build on already established links, between Irish and Nordic higher education institutes to deepen collaboration, including in the context of Horizon Europe support.
- » Work in close partnership with Norway as fellow members of the UN Security Council for the 2021-22 term as we respond to and engage with global challenges together.
- » Encourage links between the Oireachtas and the Nordic parliaments, as well as facilitating links between local authorities in Ireland and the Nordic countries. Establish links to Nordic-Baltic young parliamentary networks.
- » Encourage short-term exchanges of civil servants with the region and an Ireland/Nordic dimension to relevant Public Service leadership programmes.
- » Build on these shared interests in the EU and develop better understanding of our respective priorities across all policy areas.
- » Work to maintain the strong support of our Nordic partners in relation to Brexit and our shared interests in the future partnership of the EU with the United Kingdom.
- » Actively engage in renewed support for the Northern Periphery and Arctic Area Programme which promotes inter-regional cooperation on shared challenges and opportunities.
- » Engage further with Norway and Iceland in strengthening our shared membership of the European Economic Area.
- » Enhance opportunities for collaboration with Denmark and Finland in the seven country 'Small Advanced Economies Initiative' in the three pillars of science and innovation, economics, and foreign affairs and trade.
- » Develop our shared interests in using digital technologies to improve the lives of citizens in Europe. We will work, particularly with fellow EU 'Digital 9+' member states, to promote a stronger, more coherent Digital Single Market, facilitating growth and competitiveness.
- » Maintain our close cooperation on the multilateral agenda in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals and the sustainability agenda.

- » Develop our engagement with the Nordic Council and Nordic-Baltic 8 – including by building on the success of the Nordic-Baltic conference in Dublin in October 2019 in sharing perspectives on new security challenges, climate and sustainability matters, and digitalisation. Explore co-organising/ co-hosting further events that reflect mutually shared aspirations for the world.
- » Enhance ongoing engagement with Nordic partners on the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325, and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda more broadly, which is a shared priority for both Ireland and Norway during our tenure on the UN Security Council.
- » Build on existing engagements with Finland in support of EU peace mediation measures.
- » Work closely with the Nordic countries in promoting our shared values through the Council of Europe, in particular during Ireland's six-month Presidency of the Committee of Ministers in 2022, and including through working together on implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.
- » Work in partnership on climate issues, sharing experiences and know-how, including through the Climate Action Forum with Denmark and Sweden; and working with all Foreign Ministries in the region, and in particular with the Danish, on the Green Foreign Ministry initiative and partnership building.
- » Encourage deeper collaboration between Ireland and the Nordic countries on areas of common concern and shared interest including halting biodiversity loss; support for post-2020 UN climate targets; mitigating the effects of climate change on our oceans and preventing pollution including marine litter.
- » Explore the potential for joint visits and actions in third countries, such as the February 2019 Western Balkans visit by the Minister for European Affairs and the Secretary of State at the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
- » Deepen our understanding of regional communities. This is to include engagement with indigenous peoples within the Nordic region to further develop our understanding of their priorities. Interaction with international fora for indigenous peoples will be part of this commitment.
- » Collaborate on international development policy issues, including through our participation in the Nordic+ International Donors' Group, the Rubens Group, as well as our shared constituencies within the structures of the African Development Bank and Asian Development Bank.
- » Initiate engagement with the Council of Baltic Sea States in particular on issues of sustainability, child protection and trafficking.
- » Strengthen cooperation on transport issues of shared interest regarding commitments to sustainability, liberalised transport markets, common issues arising from our shared geographical peripherality in Europe, and on furthering road safety.



CASE STUDY 1

Former President of Finland, Mr. Martti Ahtisaari in Iveagh House where he delivered a keynote address on "The Role of the EU in Conflict Resolution" as part of the Iveagh House Lecture Series in 2017.
© Julien Behal

Peace, Security, and Conflict Resolution

Ireland and the Nordic countries enjoy a long-standing and multifaceted partnership on peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Our peacekeepers have served together in UN missions around the globe.

Finland made a major contribution to the peace process in Northern Ireland. President Ahtisaari played a vital role in the peace process in Northern Ireland, and in 2007 was nominated as international advisor to the Consultative Group on Dealing with the Past. Ireland remains a partner of President Ahtisaari through support for his Conflict Management Initiative, which works to prevent and resolve violent conflicts through informal dialogue and mediation.

Former Finnish Prime Minister, Harri Holkeri, was appointed to the International Body on decommissioning in 1995. He went on to serve as a Co-Chair of the Multi-Party Talks which concluded with the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

Ireland actively shares the lived experience of the Northern Ireland Peace Process with those looking to resolve or avert conflict. We support efforts to increase mediation capacity in the UN, EU and other international organisations. The Nordic countries also hold a long and proud record of conflict resolution, having undertaken mediation efforts in locations as diverse as Afghanistan, Sudan, the Western Balkans, the South Caucasus and the Horn of Africa.

Ireland and the Nordic countries both possess a deep knowledge and commitment to conflict resolution in all its forms. Drawing on our shared experiences, we propose that in collaboration with our Nordic partners, we actively work to share our lived experiences of conflict resolution.

Ireland and Norway's membership of the UN Security Council in 2021-22 provides a unique opportunity to further these ambitions and opens up excellent scope for further close cooperation on various international issues. We share many common values and perspectives with the Nordic countries, across a wide agenda. Our close partnership with Norway as fellow elected members of the UN Security Council will enable us to highlight a shared multilateralist agenda and constructively engage with global challenges together.

Particular areas for close cooperation in the UN context are realising the Sustainable Development Goals; Women, Peace and Security; and climate change diplomacy.

“Harri played a major and constructive role in Northern Ireland securing the Good Friday Agreement, he was a man of peace, wisdom and a very good friend to Ireland.

Former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern,
7th Annual Harri Holkeri Lecture,
Queens University, May 2019.



CASE STUDY 2

Cyclists in Copenhagen, Denmark. © Getty Images



Green Foreign Ministry

The Danish Foreign Ministry announced in 2019 its ambition to become one of the top five most sustainable Foreign Ministries in the world. Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs' climate action plan has similar aims to the Danish action plan which presented an opportunity for collaboration and partnership. Both Foreign Ministries have held a series of high-level meetings at official level to engage in lesson-sharing and mutually raise our ambitions.

Together in December 2020, the Danish Foreign Ministry and Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs co-hosted and initiated the first Network of Sustainable Foreign Ministries. The group of ten Foreign Ministries now meets quarterly to collaborate and lesson-share on this crucial global issue. The group, which is growing, is central to ensuring that our Department and others are actively engaged in reducing the carbon and greenhouse gas emissions associated with our operations.

Launch of the Network of Arctic Researchers in Ireland (NARI)
at Iveagh House in February 2020. © Phil Behan / DFA

CASE STUDY 3



The Arctic

The Arctic region is a shared high priority for the Nordic countries. It is a region of growing strategic importance, not least from a climate change and maritime perspective. With melting ice and other trends increasingly impacting upon Ireland, we have been working to define the contribution we can make and developing our relationship with bodies such as the Arctic Council.

Together with the Marine Institute, the Department of Foreign Affairs, working with Embassy Oslo, launched the Network of Arctic Researchers in Ireland (NARI) in early 2020. NARI aims to create, maintain and develop an informal all-island network of Arctic researchers in Ireland to facilitate collaboration of scientific activities linked to the Arctic, and to provide independent scientific advice to the public and policy makers. Ireland has also funded researchers on Arctic issues to participate in the Emerging Leaders Programme linked to the annual Arctic Frontiers Conference.

2

Ireland will facilitate deepened trade, tourism and knowledge exchanges with the Nordic region consistent with our climate action agenda.

Ireland and the Nordics share a commitment to free, rules-based, and sustainable trade. There are clear opportunities for knowledge sharing, for developing the circular economy and trade in green technology and energy expertise.

The economic impact of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic also underlines the importance of pursuing business opportunities with high-potential proximate markets in Europe.

We will aim to grow our bilateral trade with the region from €15 bn annually (trade with Sweden alone is above €5 bn per annum).



Reykjanes Volcano erupts in Iceland. © Cat Gundry-Beck



TO DO THIS, WE WILL:

- » Establish new research partnerships with Nordic institutes and companies by 2025. Host workshops or platforms promoting Irish expertise in areas such as green technology, data centre development, biotechnology, information technology, agricultural sciences, and sustainable tourism.
- » Engage in wider profile raising. Proactively pull together groups across areas of particular relevance and influence, with a view to identifying and maintaining a broader range of relationships.
- » Build on the Team Ireland approach to the region, supported by an annual regional market team meeting to share priorities and actions for the coming year.
- » Develop knowledge sharing workshops, both in-person and digitally, in areas such as smart energy, near zero agriculture and land management compatible with the Paris Agreement temperature and food security goals, and the bio-economy as well as supporting the development of research partnerships and exchanges.
- » Work to facilitate business-to-business exchanges in green transition and growth in renewable energy, including in areas such as hydropower, wind energy, and hydrogen exploration.
- » Support collaboration between Irish and Nordic companies on the development of carbon capture and storage technology, building on work already underway in this field.
- » Deepen our engagement in the North Seas Energy Cooperation. The development of the offshore grid and the large renewable energy potential in the region is a long-standing energy priority for the EU, Ireland, and the countries of the North Seas region (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom).
- » Engage with authorities in Ireland and the Nordic region to realise the benefits of 'smart cities' as locations in which to live and work.
- » Support the strong engagement of the Geoscience Ireland network of companies active in the Nordics in geotechnology, geophysics, civil engineering and energy projects.
- » Examine the need for a joint focus group with Nordic partners for knowledge sharing on the future development and deepening of trade and tourism between Ireland and the region, consistent with a reduction in carbon emissions.
- » Drive an increasing number of focused Team Ireland trade missions to the Nordic region.
- » Roll out an extensive programme of promotions to target Nordic visitors to Ireland, once travel conditions allow.



Bjørvika Barcode, Oslo, Norway. © Getty Images

CASE STUDY 4

Blue Economy

The “blue economy” refers to the economic potential we can realise from the marine environment while simultaneously protecting it. While there is significant economic potential for Ireland to realise from our marine environment, we know that we must do so sustainably. Similar to our Nordic partners, we will realise the potential of the blue economy but not at the expense of this natural resource.

As part of our international development priorities, Ireland is committed to developing a new oceans funding initiative to explore the potential of the blue economy for developing countries including Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The SIDS are uniquely vulnerable to the impact of climate change and it is important we assist them in mitigating its effects. Our Nordic partners are also active in assisting the SIDS and we will seek to work with them in this area.



RV Celtic Explorer journey to the Arctic in 2020. This is the first Irish vessel to receive the Polar Code Certification, allowing it to operate in the Arctic region and greatly increasing its ocean research capabilities. © Audrey Morley

CASE STUDY 5

Support for Data Centre Industry in the Nordics

With increasing trends of data centre traffic coming from the cloud, data centres have been identified as a promising field for Irish high-tech construction and engineering companies, who had already established links in the development of the most innovative and large-scale data centres in Sweden.

Enterprise Ireland has provided significant support to Irish construction companies availing of opportunities in the Nordics, through offering insights into market intelligence, local labour laws, union regulations, wider local knowledge and advice.

The Embassy in Stockholm has assisted workers coming from Ireland with a range of consular supports, including the acquisition of biometric passports to facilitate registration within the Swedish construction industry.

Team Ireland will continue to build knowledge and relationships with key companies in the sector to promote Irish expertise and capitalise on business opportunities in this rapidly growing sector.

3



Ireland will strengthen people-to-people links and links to the Global Irish community in the Nordic region.

We will build a strong sense of connection, recognition, and identity between peoples allowing all other forms of engagement to flourish.

TO CREATE THESE CONNECTIONS, WE WILL:

- » Work with education bodies to facilitate a regional or pilot a national educational exchange initiative in 2022 embracing either second or third-level education institutions.
- » Encourage and facilitate institutional links between schools, museums and partner organisations, and groups with shared interests (e.g. coding).
- » Leverage the Global Greening initiative and key festivals, including St. Patrick's Day and St. Brigid's Day, to increase Ireland's positive profile in the region.
- » Use 'Global Ireland - Ireland's Diaspora Strategy 2020-2025' as a framework for engagement and initiatives in the Nordic region.
- » Deepen our engagement with the affinity diaspora through support for Irish festivals and Irish studies programmes.
- » Promote and support Irish culture, sport, heritage and values through our work with Irish communities and the affinity diaspora, and through the Emigrant Support Programme and partnerships with the GAA, Comhaltas Ceoltóiri Éireann and others.
- » Support the regional development of Gaelic Games in the Nordics in conjunction with the GAA and especially the established and newly founded clubs in the region.
- » Maximise the potential of the re-assignment of the secondary accreditation to Iceland to Embassy Oslo.
- » Develop enhanced data on international alumni, mapping their location to support the development of networks of interest in the Nordic region.
- » Deepen support for and engagement with Irish diaspora business networks and foster links between them (e.g. a Nordic-Baltic network of Chambers of Commerce).

CASE STUDY 6

Irish Chamber of Commerce in Sweden



© Irish Chamber of Commerce in Sweden

The Irish Chamber of Commerce in Sweden was formally launched by then Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan T.D., in March 2018. The establishment of the Chamber was a result of close collaboration between Chamber members, the Embassy of Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and Bord Bia.

The goal of the Chamber is to support Irish and Swedish businesses and to provide a platform to build personal links between Irish and Swedish business professionals and facilitate links within the community of Irish business professionals working in Sweden. It is also active in promoting collaboration between Chambers in the region.

The Chamber has over fifty members, including corporates. It is closely connected to the Ireland House team, engaging and collaborating with the Embassy of Ireland in Stockholm and State Agencies on events, and has received Emigrant Support Programme funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs.

CASE STUDY 7



Ailbhe and Izzy, Founders of Izzy Wheels. © Sarah Doyle

Izzy Wheels – A St Brigid's Day Celebration of Female Creativity

Multi-award winning entrepreneurs and named on the Forbes '30 under 30' list, Ailbhe and Isabel Keane, the founders of Izzy Wheels, travelled to Denmark in February 2020 for the Embassy's inaugural St Brigid's Day event. Attendees included the Danish Disability Foundation. The event was listed in the official Copenhagen Fashion Week calendar, the largest and most prominent fashion week in the Nordic region.

Izzy Wheels was born out of a final year college project by Ailbhe who designed stylish wheel covers for her sister Isabel's wheelchair. An Enterprise Ireland client company, they now supply to over 35 countries, have collaborated with major brands and have been featured on some of the world's leading publications.

4



Ireland will grow its reputation across the Nordic countries through enhanced promotion of culture, heritage and linkages.

- » Encourage media collaboration focused on cultural, historical and contemporary links between Ireland and the Nordic countries.
- » Map business and cultural connections (on a phased basis), and develop links between regions and cities by facilitating collaboration between universities, Chambers of Commerce, city councils, and businesses.

We will increase the prominence of Irish culture and identity in the region, in particular by showcasing a diverse and contemporary Ireland.

WE WILL:

- » Launch new cultural initiatives in the Nordic-Baltic region once health and travel conditions allow.
- » Launch an Ireland cultural competition targeting second-level students.
- » Raise the profile of Irish design in the Nordic region. Create opportunities to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the foundation of Kilkenny Design Workshops.
- » Work with key partners to raise Ireland's cultural profile in the Nordic region and promote exchanges and partnerships.
- » Implement regional and country-specific campaigns, both online and in-person, to promote Irish culture and design, and celebrate shared cultural links.



Part of Embassy Copenhagen's St Patrick's Day 2021 Trail.
Photo taken at Gammel Strand, Copenhagen. © Emily Wilson

“I am a young Irishman,
eighteen years old, and the
words of Ibsen I shall keep in
my heart all my life.

*Letter from James Joyce, aged 18,
about Henrik Ibsen, 28 April 1900.*

”



Illustrations by Harry Clarke for Hans Christian Andersen's "Fairy Tales" published in 1916. © Harry Clarke

CASE STUDY 8

Celtic Studies and University Links

Some form of Celtic Studies has been a part of Swedish academia since the early 20th century.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Docent Carl Wilhelm von Sydow taught Gaelic and lectured on Irish folklore in Lund University. In 1948-49, a visiting professorship was established in Uppsala University, a position which still exists today, alongside courses in Contemporary Irish Literature and teacher training programmes which involve links with Maynooth University and Hibernia College Dublin.

The area of higher education presents us with a unique opportunity to further deepen existing relationships and establish wider connections between Swedish and Irish institutions.

Stockholm Gaels - Helsinki Tournament 2019. © Stockholm Gaels



Glenalla performing at Konst O Deli, 2019 Irish Festival of Oulu, Finland. © Jukka Parviainen



Irish Dancing at 2019 Irish Festival of Oulu, Finland.
© Ilkka Laakko



Zoe Conway and John McIntyre at the 2019 Irish Festival of Oulu, Finland. © Ilkka Laakko

CASE STUDY 9



Irish Festival of Oulu

The Irish Festival of Oulu is the world's most northerly Irish Music Festival and is the largest Irish Festival in the Nordic region. It has taken place annually since 2006. It is a rich and inclusive celebration of Irish culture comprising music, theatre, poetry, storytelling, art, film, dance, music education and children's culture. Past performers at the Festival have included The Chieftains, Bill Whelan's Riverdance, a Symphonic Suite, Altan, Paddy Glackin, and Michael Longley. The supporters of the Festival include Culture Ireland, the City of Oulu, Tourism Ireland, the Irish Film Institute,

and the Embassy of Ireland in Helsinki. The Festival has strengthened connections between Galway and the City of Oulu through the European Capital of Culture project. The organisers of the Festival have also been responsible for some of the most innovative Global Greenings in recent years. This includes greening the first known attempt to perform Irish music from inside an icy pool of water in 2019.

5

A strong Government-led Team Ireland will significantly increase its impact to 2025.

We will continually strengthen our Team Ireland approach in the region.

Ireland has a network of four Embassies and two Honorary Consuls in the Nordic region. The Embassies are in Copenhagen, Helsinki, Oslo, and Stockholm. The Honorary Consulates are in Bergen and Reykjavík. The Embassy network currently comprises eight posted officers and thirteen locally recruited office staff. The Embassies collaborate closely to pursue common objectives and coordination will deepen with the implementation of the Nordic Strategy.

Enterprise Ireland has offices in Stockholm and Copenhagen. Bord Bia covers the region from Stockholm. Tourism Ireland services the Nordic countries from its office in Copenhagen. IDA Ireland oversees opportunities in the region from its regional headquarters in Frankfurt. The local market teams comprising Embassies and state agencies will be key to the delivery of the economic and trade ambitions of the Strategy.

The Department of Foreign Affairs budget allocated to Embassies in the Nordic region is €2.2m approximately per annum. This includes staffing and accommodation costs. Approximately €100,000 is allocated to promotional activity by the Embassy network annually.

The allocation of resources (including for promotion and outreach) will be kept under review to ensure that they are adequate to deliver the objectives of the Strategy.

WE WILL:

- » Develop added-value from the appointments of new Honorary Consuls of Ireland in Iceland and Norway, and examine options for additional appointments.
- » Establish links between Team Ireland local staff in the region facilitating information exchange and cooperation as well as access to training on a regional level.
- » Develop a detailed implementation plan setting out objectives, lead units and missions, key performance indicators and milestones as well as risks and mitigations within four months of adoption of the Strategy.
- » Roll out the Ireland House model across the region as much as is practical, capitalising and expanding on the Ireland House model already operational in Stockholm.
- » Ensure collective Team Ireland support and collaboration to achieve strategic goals for tourism, trade, and investment in the Nordics.
- » Build on the potential arising from the new Enterprise Ireland office in Copenhagen, and the expanded Enterprise Ireland presence in Stockholm, with a clear focus on green investment and the green agenda.
- » Develop a Nordic presence on Ireland.ie as the digital platform “Ireland House in the cloud”.
- » Strengthen our Team Ireland approach underpinned by Local Market Country Team workshops and Country Plans, with the participation periodically of visiting Ministers.
- » Continually review the need to strengthen the various parts of the Team Ireland presence in the region.



Their Majesties King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden in the National History Museum, Dublin, on their State Visit to Ireland in May 2019. © Phil Behan / DFA

CASE STUDY 10

Honorary Consuls – Norway/Iceland

Ireland currently has two Honorary Consuls in the Nordic region, in Bergen on the West Coast of Norway and in Reykjavík, Iceland, who work closely with the Embassy in Oslo, which covers both countries.

Gavin Collins represents Irish interests in Bergen and the surrounding West Coast of Norway. As an Irish businessman living in Bergen he is well attuned to the economic and cultural life of the West Coast and supports the Embassy's work in the region, as well as being on the ground to tend to the consular interests of the Irish community.

Jens Thórdarson is the Honorary Consul of Ireland in Reykjavík. With the Ambassador in Oslo accredited to Iceland, the Honorary Consul is an invaluable asset and available to look after the consular interests of Irish citizens. As an Icelandic airline executive with close links to Ireland and connection into the local business environment, he is an important presence in a country with so many historical and cultural associations with Ireland.

Infographic

Facts about Ireland and the Nordics

Ireland and our Nordic neighbours share many historical and cultural connections. Did you know...

DENMARK

James Joyce spoke Danish!

At the age of 18 Joyce began **learning Danish** out of admiration for the works of Danish novelist, **Jens Peter Jacobsen** and indeed, **Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen**.



The **Irish artist Harry Clarke** **illustrated** **Hans Christian Andersen's 'Fairy Tales'** in a book published in 1916.

ICELAND



Connections between Iceland and Ireland began around the 7th and 8th centuries when **Irish monks first explored Iceland**.

Irish Christian anchorites (holy-men seeking seclusion from society) reportedly **discovered and lived in Iceland** before the arrival of pagan settlers from Scandinavia!

Genetic studies show significant DNA connections between Ireland and Iceland, especially among the female population.



SWEDEN

11 Nobel prize winners come from the island of Ireland, **including five for peace and four for literature**.



Medieval Swedish queen **Birgitta Haraldsdotter** is thought to have had an **Irish grandmother**. Her father, **Harald IV of Norway**, was born in Ireland.

NORWAY

St Sunniva, honoured as the **patron saint of Western Norway**, was the daughter of a 10th century **Irish king** and arrived in Norway around 950, seeking refuge on the island of Selja on the western coast of Norway.



The traditional eight-stringed **Hardanger fiddle**, considered as a **national instrument of Norway**, is also widely **used by traditional musicians in Ireland**.

FINLAND

Ireland and Finland have many historical parallels including **famines** in the 19th century, **independence** in the early 20th century, followed by **civil war**. We also **both have two national languages** respectively.

Ireland and Finland **joined the UN** on the same day, 14 December 1955. **Irish and Finnish peacekeepers have served side by side** in the Lebanon and in Chad.





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