

Invitation to workshop

Coordination of Nordic Building Regulations

27 October, 2025 | Hotel Sheraton, Stockholm

Towards a Common Nordic Construction Market

The Nordic Council of Ministers, the Association of European Border Regions, and the Svinesund Committee are organising a workshop on coordination of Nordic building regulations across borders as a way of unlocking new sustainable construction markets.

Invited participants: Members of the Nordic Steering Group for Harmonisation of Building Regulations, representatives of relevant trade associations and relevant political representatives.

Background

In 2018, the Nordic construction and housing ministers agreed to a common Nordic building and construction market. They agreed to make the Nordic Region the world's most integrated construction market that "ensures better and cheaper buildings ... for the benefit of Nordic citizens, the real estate sector and the construction industry." Today, seven years later, we still have Europe's highest construction costs, and it is still just as difficult for building and construction companies to carry out projects in neighbouring countries.

However, the conditions for a common Nordic construction market are better than they have been in a long time. Several of the Nordic countries are in the process of simplifying building regulations by reducing detailed control and delegating more responsibility to construction companies. The digitalisation of the construction process requires clear and unambiguous terminology, which is a necessary prerequisite for harmonising regulations. And the EU is pushing for a green transition of the construction sector that requires similar regulations in all member states.

With this seminar, the Nordic Freedom of Movement Council, the Svinesund Committee and the Association of European Border Regions want to draw attention to the opportunities that better coordination of Nordic building regulations across borders brings. Which differences in building regulations do companies in the construction and civil engineering sector see as the most costly to manage? If these can be eliminated, what are the opportunities for more efficient construction? What advantages do housing companies see in a common Nordic construction market? And what development potential can it unleash in the Nordic border regions?

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Programme

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Welcome to a future-oriented workshop

Moderator: Caitriona Mullan, B-Solutions and Cross-Border Expert, Association of European Border Regions

11:00 – 12:30

Opening address Fredrik Karlström, Chair of the Freedom of Movement Council

What problems do varying regulations create for trade between neighbouring countries?

Anders Ahnlid, Director-General, National Board of Trade Sweden

Pathways towards a common solution

Annika Daisley, The Svinesund Committee
Dr. Kjell Nilsson, Nilsson Landscape

12:30 – 12:45 Break

12:45 – 14:00 Theme 1:

What problems do the construction industry and the architects experience with different rules and how do they handle the obstacles?

Panel debate with representatives of the housing, building and construction industry will include:

Gert Wingård (Wingårdhs), Jimmy Bengtsson (Veidekke), Cathrine Holgersson (Sveriges Allmännytt), Daniel Kjørberg Siraj (OBOS), Lars Atterfors (INWOCO)

14:00 – 14:45 Lunch

14:45 – 15:30 Theme 2:

Trends that might support common building regulation

New and simplified building rules in Finland and Sweden

Ministry of Environment, Boverket

Can industrial construction render better efficiency and what role does common rules play for this?

Niclas Svensson Swedish Industrial Construction Council

15:30 – 16:30 Theme 3:

Removing obstacles to trade, innovation and mobility: benefits for cross-border regions

Will addressing border obstacles unleash new business potentials and boost regional development in the cross-border regions?

Johan Wessman, CEO, Øresundsinstitutet

How can coordinated Nordic building rules promote cross-border trade and innovation?

Nordic Innovation

Addressing the border effect and building cross-border economies of scale: a pan-European perspective

Ricardo Ferreira, Coordinator, Border Focal Point, European Commission DG REGIO

16:30 – 17:00 Wrapping up

Comments by members of the Freedom of Movement Council

