



Statement 1:

Tourism in the Nordic region: environment and sustainability at the fore

Cooperation in the field of tourism in the Nordic region offers many benefits outside the Nordic area, where the Nordic countries are generally seen as a single destination. We can promote the area better if we work together, and an increase in sustainable tourism is good for employment. In 2019 the Nordic Council of Ministers adopted a new 2019-2023 Plan for Nordic Cooperation on Tourism.

The plan is clearly a result of many countries with different priorities having chosen the lowest common denominator for their collaboration. The plan is to be implemented by a Nordic Committee of Senior Officials for Business Policies (EK-N). It is a good start, but nothing more than that. Cooperation between actors in the travel industry must involve annual tourism conferences. In addition, the 'visit companies' and the governments in the Nordic countries must work together.

In its plan, the Nordic Council of Ministers lists four strategic themes:

- The Nordic region: a competitive region
- The Nordic region: a smart and innovative region
- The Nordic region: a sustainable region
- The Nordic region: an attractive region

The foundation for this plan is the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which impose strict requirements on both public authorities and actors in the industry as to how the industry can and should develop. Carbon emissions must be reduced. Air, sea and road transport in the travel industry is a major contributor to climate change, but the climate impact of accommodation and catering as such is relatively small. Political priorities in the Nordic countries must be based on knowledge and knowhow. Meeting the UN sustainability goals calls for commitment, and our members must contribute to making a difference by presenting proposals and suggesting solutions in areas such as food waste, efficient use of chemicals, technological development and the organisation of work. A great deal of important innovation is rooted in something as simple as listening to working people who have insight into what they are doing. It is basically a question of feeling secure, since security induces willingness, competence and commitment to develop one's workplace by identifying smart ways of doing the jobs and using new technology.

This is a great weakness of the report. Other plans prepared by the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic Council highlight the Nordic model as one of the outstanding features of Nordic societies. In the context of the plan not single word is said about the model. NU-HRCT intends to take this up with the Nordic Council Secretariat. In continuation of the Council's response to NU-HRCT's enquiry about the lack of skilled workers, NU-HRCT, in collaboration with the rest of the Nordic trade union movement and close allies among the politicians in the Nordic Council, must secure a position in which it can influence and participate in continued work with the plan, as well as in relation to other relevant Nordic policies.

Development of sustainable tourism calls for courage and action and will require changes to tourism as we know it today. Such development must be the basis for the definition of all necessary political priorities. The transition to greener tourism must be fair and equitable. The workers should not bear

the entire brunt of it in the form of precarious jobs and lower pay. The initiatives taken must be effective and fully embraced by the workers.

It is the workers in the tourism and travel industry who create travel experiences and provide the related services. Their working conditions and their skills are crucial to the product supplied. That is why it is important to us and to the Nordic region in general that the Nordic model works and is applied to ensure optimal results, also in the context of tourism.