



Studia i Materiały. Miscellanea Oeconomicae  
Rok 18, Nr 2/2014  
Wydział Zarządzania i Administracji  
Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego w Kielcach

## The Arctic and Nordic Countries in the World of Economy and Politics

Joanna Grzela<sup>1</sup>

### THE NORDIC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS – THE EFFECTIVE FORUM FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION OF STATES<sup>2</sup>

#### Introduction

Nordic cooperation is built on shared values, desire for enhancing dynamic development as well as increasing Nordic unity and competitiveness. Its extremely numerous forms, directions and branches are based on the foundations of several-hundred-year-old relations between the states and peoples of the area. The cooperation with neighbours has been present in almost every of their organization. However, the Nordic Council (RN) and the Nordic Council of Ministers (NRM) play a crucial role, as they have been extremely active in accelerating the integration of the countries of the region<sup>3</sup>.

The Nordic Council of Ministers was founded with the particular aim of maintaining the existing cooperation of the countries of Northern Europe. The scope of its activities is not limited - it can take decisions on cooperation between the Member States to the extent, provided in the document constituting it, i.e. economic issues, communication, transport, culture and law, but also in matters of

<sup>1</sup> Joana Grzela, Ph.D., the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Poland.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. R.M. Czarny is a researcher, studying the issues of Northern Europe and Nordic states. See, i.a.: *W nowej Europie. Słownik terminologiczny*, Kielce 2003, 2005; *Dylematy energetyczne państw regionu nordyckiego*, Kielce 2009; *Energy Dilemmas of the Nordic Region Countries*, Kielce 2009; *Wymiar północny Unii Europejskiej. Studium rozwoju* (together with M. Tomala), Kielce 2009.

<sup>3</sup> *Treaty of Cooperation between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden (the Helsinki Treaty)*, [http://www.norden.org/en/publications/publications/2005-713/at\\_download/publicationfile](http://www.norden.org/en/publications/publications/2005-713/at_download/publicationfile), [01.03.2014]. A. Marszałek, *Rada Nordycka i Nordycka Rada Ministrów*, [in:] *Integracja Europejska*, ed. A. Marszałek, Łódź 1997, p. 197 and f.; Z.M. Doliwa – Klepacki, *Integracja europejska*, Białystok 1999, pp. 334 – 356; Z.M. Doliwa – Klepacki, *Integracja europejska (po Amsterdamie i Nicei)*, Białystok 2001 *passim*.

agreements concluded by these countries. The aim of intergovernmental cooperation is to promote joint Nordic solutions, which produce specific positive effects for the citizens of the individual Nordic countries. This allows these countries to have a greater influence on the decisions taken both at European and global level.

### **The emergence and nature of activities of the Nordic Council of Ministers**

The Nordic Council of Ministers was formed on February 13, 1971, as a forum for cooperation at the government level, to intensify contacts between the member states<sup>4</sup>. Earlier, in 1952, the Nordic Council, which gathers the representatives of the Parliaments of the Nordic states, was established.

The Nordic Council of Ministers was ratified by Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Denmark. On 01.01.1973, Denmark was the only Nordic country, that was a member of the EEC. Anker Jørgensen, the then Danish Prime Minister, explained in a postscript to his memoirs, that Denmark had not failed to maintain the cooperation because of its membership in the EEC: “On the contrary, we tried, in accordance with the expectations of other Scandinavian countries, to build a bridge between Scandinavia and Europe”<sup>5</sup>.

Decisions taken by the Nordic Council of Ministers are also binding on the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland Islands to the extent, which is consistent with their status of autonomy. Since 2007, their role in the Nordic cooperation has been strengthened. From that moment these territories are allowed to participate in the proceedings of the joint Nordic institutions and bodies on the same terms as the Member States. This means, that the Åland Islands, Faroe Islands and Greenland may apply for full membership in these institutions under the Treaty of Helsinki.

The ministers for Nordic cooperation and the Nordic Committee for cooperation are involved in the coordination of the proceedings of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Committee is responsible for a day-to-day work of the cooperation. It is composed of senior civil servants from the five Nordic countries, as well as the representatives of the autonomous territories of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland Islands. The Committee also coordinates the work of National Secretariats for Nordic cooperation.

The ministers for the Nordic cooperation from the governments of the member states as well as the ministers, responsible for the matters, which are the subject of a meeting of the Council, participate in the proceedings of the Nordic Council. Currently, there are 10 constellations of Councils of Ministers and the Council of Ministers for Nordic cooperation - MR-SAM. The Nordic Council of Ministers meets in different constellations of ministers in specific fields, which are responsible for e.g.: labour policy, regional policy, business and energy, justice,

---

<sup>4</sup> *Recommendations, statements and internal resolutions adopted at the 49<sup>th</sup> Session 1997 of the Nordic Council*, Helsinki, November 10-13, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> As cited in: <http://www.norden.org/en/about-nordic-co-operation/the-history-of-nordic-co-operation/197220131989>, [02.03.2014].

environmental protection, health and social affairs, culture, education and research, agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry, finance and gender equality.

All decisions of the Nordic Council of Ministers must be unanimous and they are binding upon the member states. The meetings take place a few times a year. The work of individual councils of ministers is supported by the Committee of Senior Officials. Meetings of foreign and defence ministers are held outside the structures of the Council, as matters falling within the competence of both these ministries are not a formal ground for cooperation.

The Secretariat in Copenhagen<sup>6</sup> leads the current inter-governmental cooperation. It is here, that the preparatory work is done before issues are raised at the ministerial councils and the committees of senior officials. The Secretariat is also responsible for the implementation of decisions of the Council.

The Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers NRM (similarly to the Nordic Council RN) rotates between the five Nordic countries, thus it is held for one year at a time by each country. The Presidency is responsible for coordinating the cooperation between the member states, it undertakes initiatives, whose objective is ensuring both the dynamics and continuity of contacts, moreover, it gives individual member states the possibility to shape the priorities of the cooperation.

#### **The priorities of the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2013 and 2014**

In 2013, Sweden held the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The list of its priorities included: fight against social exclusion, in particular youth unemployment by improving freedom of movement in the joint Nordic labour market and the elimination of barriers to cross-border mobility, strengthening competitiveness and innovation, especially in the context of developing economies in Asia, Africa and Latin America, while building a sustainable society and the environment, combating the challenges of demography (aging population and decrease in the number of skilled workers), moreover, economic growth, prosperity and solidarity. Sweden assumed the continuation of the existing arrangements for cooperation with other states or actors in the Nordic region, i.e.: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Northwestern Russia, Belarus, the Arctic Council and the EU within the framework of the “Northern Dimension” and within the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region<sup>7</sup>. These issues have been widely presented in the document called *The Nordic model in a new era*:

---

<sup>6</sup> The General Secretary was for many years Halldór Ásgrímsson (the former Prime Minister of Iceland). On 4 March 2013 Dagfinn Høybråten took the office of the General Secretary of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

<sup>7</sup> *The Nordic model in a new era Programme for the Swedish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers 2013*, in: [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org) [19.02.2014]; *Programme launched for Swedish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Minister*, <http://www.government.se/sb/d/16618/a/202648>, [11.02.2014].

- combating social exclusion (protection of children's rights, introducing measures to tackle youth unemployment, elimination of barriers to cross-border mobility, presenting the results of research on gender equality, the analysis of the economic impact of gender inequality, digitization, protection of digital resources and digital access to cultural heritage as well as elderly care and the development of social insurance);
- competitiveness (keeping the existing model of the welfare state, which has been sustained over the past decades. Nordic companies have been encouraged to look for new strategic markets and effectively beat off the competitors: „In a world, where financial currents are flowing faster and they are stronger, and the competition is on the rise, Scandinavian countries can take advantage of their close links with each other. Our similar economy and social culture are the basis for joint investments, which allow us to focus on the areas, in which we can increase our competitiveness and visibility in the world”. Sweden has focused, amongst many business issues, on an active construction market as well as elimination of barriers to cross-border mobility, often pointed out by Scandinavian construction companies. Furthermore, the country has stressed out, that modern rural enterprise can and should become the engine of economic growth - providing local solutions to global challenges. The Swedish government has highlighted opportunities for further strengthening of the position of the countries of the region through the development of green technologies, ensuring lower emissions. An important asset to the Nordic region is the Nordic Ecolabel, which allows consumers to choose the most eco-friendly products on the market, which, consequently, stimulates the production of environmentally-friendly products);
- sustainable society (the model of a Scandinavian welfare state must be economically, socially and ecologically sustainable, based on strong ecosystems, sustainable consumption and production, research, training, education and innovations. In order to promote eco-friendly economic growth as well as improving resource efficiency, Sweden stressed out the further development of renewable energy resources, the development and implementation of the new energy policy for the years 2014-2017, minimising waste and recycling. Also actions aimed at sustainable use of marine resources and improving the environmental conditions of the Baltic Sea and the North Sea);
- demographic challenges (increasing proportion of older people increases the demand for elderly care, thus Sweden has emphasized that the Nordic social model, as before, should provide high-quality care for the elderly. The presidency carried out studies on how demographic changes affect the national social security systems and how they can be strengthened.);
- Scandinavia in a global perspective (Nordic countries have closer, than most other state groups, links with one another. From international perspective, they are perceived as a group of countries, that think alike, do alike and vote alike. This creates the conditions for the concerted international input and joint solutions, within and outside of the formal cooperation regulated by the Nordic

Council of Ministers: „On the global stage, we constitute a clear, joint voice for sustainable development, democracy, equality, international solidarity and peaceful resolution of conflicts. We are among the largest development aid donors in the world, we support the UN and other international organisations, and we provide personnel for a number of important international initiatives. By virtue of our long-term commitment to peace and freedom, we have built up a considerable level of respect. We must protect and use our standing in order to continue to make a constructive contribution to international efforts to create a more just world. [...] The Nordic name is an asset that we will continue to protect and develop”<sup>8</sup>.

The departing point for the Presidency, was the Nordic social model, closely associated with numerous key values, including democracy, transparency, social solidarity, tolerance for dissent, equality and individualism, and that contributed to the prosperity and solidarity of the people of this region.

During the 65th session of the Nordic Council, held on 29-31 October 2013, in Oslo, Iceland took over the presidency of the NRM for 2014. In its programme, the country highlights the growing importance of balance in all areas of the country's activities. Green economy, the security of the welfare state and the promotion of the Nordic culture are the principal objectives of its Presidency. The Icelandic government wants to focus, in particular, on the biological resources of Scandinavia - including for their sustainable use, minimizing waste and maximizing their processing methods. “Our natural resources are not inexhaustible and therefore we have a duty to ensure sustainable use and avoid waste. If we want to ensure green growth in the long-run, we must also link these goals to education and the upbringing of our children”<sup>9</sup> - said the Icelandic Minister for the Nordic cooperation, Eygló Harðardóttir, during the meeting, in which the Icelandic cooperation was launched. The Icelandic Presidency will therefore launch a number of initiatives in bioeconomy and as well as strengthen the interaction between energy, the environment and the climate sector. It further assumes, that in the coming period, efforts will be made to increase the environmental awareness of citizens and to reduce the negative human impact on the environment, sustainable use of resources, supporting and enhancing the development of environmentally friendly production methods as well as promoting innovation.

Increased stability of care systems in the Nordic countries is the top priority of Iceland - a country strongly experienced by the economic crisis, which “rocked” the foundations of the Nordic welfare state. „After the economic collapse in Iceland, a so-called 'welfare watch' was set up to help meet the problems in the wake of the crisis. In the same way, a Nordic welfare watch can contribute to analysing developments in the Nordic countries and strengthen collaboration on

---

<sup>8</sup> *The Nordic model in a new era. Programme for the Swedish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers 2013*, [http://norden39.ru/gallery/\\_norden/nordic\\_cooperation/749\\_eng.pdf](http://norden39.ru/gallery/_norden/nordic_cooperation/749_eng.pdf), [11.02.2014].

<sup>9</sup> As cited in: <http://www.norden.org/en/news-and-events/news/iceland-heads-up-nordic-co-operation>, [30.01.2014].

the Nordic model” – said Eygló Harðardóttir<sup>10</sup>. The aim of the project is to examine the effects of the financial crisis for the Nordic social systems, their impact on health, social care and employment. Collecting and developing welfare indicators can be used as the basis for new measures and strategies in the welfare area in the Nordic countries.

History and culture are one of the fundamental pillars of the Nordic cooperation, therefore, during its Presidency, Iceland wants to support education and the research on a common language and culture. During the Icelandic Presidency, attention should be paid to the role of music and design<sup>11</sup>.

### **The areas and the effects of regional cooperation of the Nordic countries**

The Nordic Council of Ministers determines the areas of contacts and decides on matters of the Nordic budget as well as provides the directions of cooperation in all fields of internal policy of the Nordic countries. The results of the intergovernmental cooperation include: decisions regarding the implementation and financing joint ventures, international agreements, guidelines for national legislation and functioning of many institutions of the Nordic cooperation. The aim is to implement the common policies of the Nordic countries, developed by the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

In the economic field, the Council focuses on: regional policy (through the development of cross-border cooperation); energy policy<sup>12</sup>, industrial and trade policy - through the development of contacts between the companies of the Member States<sup>13</sup>; financial and monetary matters (the states work out common positions and unanimously present them on the forum of such organizations as the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development)<sup>14</sup>; development of transport and communication (the states work towards the modernization and improvement of public transport and the issue of road traffic, including the reasonable development of transport system in border and northern regions). Moreover, the Scandinavian countries are committed to the

---

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>11</sup> *Vigour – Vitality. Programme for the Icelandic Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers 2014*, <http://www.norden.org/en/publications/publikationer/2013-770>, [30.01.2014].

<sup>12</sup> NORDEL- an association for electricity co-operation in the Nordic countries was founded.; Nordic Energy Research is an institution, which finances the research on energy in Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland.

<sup>13</sup> Nordic Innovation Centre – NICE - initiates and finances the activities aiming at increasing the innovativeness of small and medium- sized enterprises in the Nordic countries. Its objective is to remove national barriers to the development of such businesses; Nordic Project Fund (Nopef) is a finance institution within the Nordic Council of Ministers, whose purpose is to enhance the international competitiveness of small and medium- sized enterprises.

<sup>14</sup> Nordic cooperation in the field of finance has been strengthened by founding “Norex” Stock Exchange - an alliance of existing stock-exchanges in Nordic countries. The CEOs of stock exchanges in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have also expressed their willingness to join the alliance.



development of cooperation in the fields of legislation, culture<sup>15</sup>, education<sup>16</sup> and science<sup>17</sup>, health and social welfare<sup>18</sup> and environmental protection.

The activities of the NRM thus cover nearly all the branches of international relations. In order to facilitate co-operation in various fields a number of agreements are signed, including agreement establishing a common labour market, agreement on the passport union<sup>19</sup>, culture and transport agreement, convention on

---

<sup>15</sup> Nordic Culture Point, which serves as the secretariat to cultural programs, provides information on the programmes and gives financial support to cultural institutions; Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research (NORDICOM) - aims to spread knowledge in the field of media and communications in the Nordic countries; Nordic House in Reykjavik is a cultural institution, whose purpose is to strengthen cultural contacts between Iceland and other Scandinavian countries; Nordic Institute in Finland (NIFIN) - aims to provide the people of Finland with knowledge of the languages and culture of the other Scandinavian countries and cultures; Nordic Institute of Greenland (Napa) - supports, stimulates and contributes to the development of cultural life in Greenland, with the main emphasis on children and youth; Nordic Institute in Åland - its mission is to enhance the cultural life of the people of this region through contacts with other Scandinavian countries and to present the culture of the Åland Islands in other parts of Scandinavia.

<sup>16</sup> In 2000, the Nordic Council of Ministers, implemented a program NORDPLUS - offering young people a chance to combine travel and study. Under this program, there are three types of grants: NORDPLUS - for students, teachers and researchers in universities and other institutions of higher education; NORDPLUS - junior for the teenagers at the age from 16 - 19 and their teachers; NORDPLUS - mini for classes consisting of 13-16 year-old students and their teachers. The program offers financial support in the field of lifelong learning to participants from eight countries: the Baltic and the Scandinavian states. Its aim is to create a common Baltic - Nordic educational space.

<sup>17</sup> The priorities of the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers include cooperation in the field of culture, science and education. The foundation of many Nordic research institutes should be particularly emphasised. The best-known are: Nordic Centre for Spatial Development (NORDREGIO), Scandinavian Institute of Maritime Law, Nordic Institute for Theoretical Physics and the Institute of Folklore. The research sector is coordinated by the NordForsk, the institution, which supports mobility of scientists and provides opportunities to conduct research in other Scandinavian countries. Cooperation in the field of education has also increased. NORDUNET database has been established and a school computer network ODIN has been connected to the INTERNET within the framework of the Nordic scientific system. A number of educational programs, scholarships, social programmes have been launched, etc.

<sup>18</sup> Nordic Centre for Welfare and Social Affairs has been established. Its aim is to improve the quality of social policy in the Nordic countries, to promote research, to create an international, cooperation network; there is Nordic School of Public Health (NHV), which is an institution of higher education and research in the field of public health. The school offers training in health care to medical personnel in the Nordic countries and adjacent areas.

<sup>19</sup> See: *Protocol concerning the exemption of nationals of the Nordic countries from the obligation to have a passport or residence permit while resident in a Nordic country other than their own*, <http://www.norden.org/en/about-nordic-co-operation/agreements/treaties-and-agreements/passport-issues-citizenship-and-national-registration/protocol-concerning-the-exemption-of-nationals-of-the-nordic-countries-from-the-obligation-to-have-a-passport-or-residence-permit-while-resident-in-a-nordic-country-other-than-their-own>, [25.02.2014]; *The Nordic Passport Convention*, w: <http://www.norden.org/en/about-nordic-co-operation/agreements/treaties-and-agreements/passport-issues-citizenship-and-national-registration/the-nordic-passport-convention>, [25.02.2014]. According to the opinion of the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden in Poland in 2000-2005 - J.E. Mats Staffansson, the decisions resulted in the so called „small

the protection of the environment, convention on languages and social convention. Already just after its foundation, the Council established the Legal Committee, whose task was to prepare drafts of unification of law of the Nordic states, regarding virtually all aspects of life: economic, social, cultural, which were formulated in the form of recommendations to the governments of these countries. They then became the basis of international conventions concluded by the governments, or were passed by parliaments in the form of acts.

Matters relating to children and young people take major priority within the Nordic Council of Ministers. In this field, the Nordic Committee for Children and Young adults (NORDBUK) holds the responsibility of a supervising and advisory organ. The areas of interest of NORDBUK coincide with the sectors of cooperation within the Nordic Council of Ministers. In addition, there is an Advisory Group For the Nordic School Co-Operation (NSS) – an advisory organ for Nordic Schools Cooperation, whose task is to develop the network of schools and to support cooperation between the Scandinavian schools, while the Nordic Association of School Librarians promotes cooperation between school libraries. Nordic Child Cultural Research Network BIN-Norden is a network, based on humanistic, cultural-historical and aesthetical studies. Originally, it focused on literature and new media for children, children's folklore and their oral expressions; now all humanistic studies based on a cultural-historic, cultural-theoretic and aesthetical approach are included. The participants of the network represent the major Nordic research institutions in this field. BIN-Norden offers support for the study of children's culture. Filmkontakt Nord (FKN) is engaged in the promotion of Nordic short films and documentaries around the world. Nordic Language Campaign (Den Nordiske sprogkampagne) aims to improve the skills of Scandinavian children and young people in understanding and communicating with each other in one of three languages: Danish, Norwegian and Swedish. Moreover, NRM has created a portal for children and youth culture in all Scandinavian countries. The portal, called Valhalla, primarily aims at adults working with children and youth culture, however, it can also serve as a source of reference for young people and other persons who are interested in these issues, as it features current developments in architecture and design, visual arts, dance and theatre, film, research and education, games and physical exercises, literature and music. In addition, it serves as a forum for sharing views and experience of all those working with children, young people and dealing with culture in the Nordic countries. Furthermore, it creates opportunities for contact and network building in the field<sup>20</sup>.

The Nordic co-operation is financed principally with tax revenues from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The total annual budget for the Nordic Council

---

integration” of the Nordic countries. Since the mid 1950s, the citizens of Scandinavian countries can move freely across borders, take up jobs without any restrictions, which leads to perceiving them as close neighbours. More in: A. Dąbrowska, *Szwedzka Prezydencja. Rozmowa z Ambasadorem Królestwa Szwecji w Polsce J.E. Mats Staffanssonem*, „Unia Europejska” no. 4/2001, pp. 3 – 6.

<sup>20</sup> See: <http://valhalla.norden.org/about-valhalla>. [09.03.2014].



is about DKK 30 million and the budget for the Nordic Council of Ministers is slightly more than DKK 900 million<sup>21</sup>. This means that Nordic co-operation costs no more than about DKK 40 per head in the Nordic countries. More than one-third of the sum is used to finance Nordic institutions<sup>22</sup>. The contributions of individual countries are dependent on their current strength and potential<sup>23</sup>.

## Conclusions

Nordic co-operation has a long tradition and is deeply rooted in the thinking of Nordic citizens. It is one of the oldest and most extensive forms of regional cooperation in the world. The main priorities of the Nordic intergovernmental cooperation include: climate, environment and energy, education and research, welfare and culture. There are strong ties between the Nordic countries as well as their inhabitants. Nordic cooperation makes them even stronger through, amongst many things, cultural, educational and research projects, environmental protection, social welfare system as well as supporting the freedom of movement in the region. The Nordic Council of Ministers has proven its worth as a platform for cooperation and dialogue, both in and outside the region.

The region has the potential to be a world leader in many disciplines. There is a great interest in the directions of regional cooperation of the Nordic countries, as it contributes to stability and security in this part of Europe. More importantly, the Nordic countries jointly manage to overcome many barriers to their socio-economic development. They seem aware of the fact, that together are able to achieve more than alone. Global challenges related to the climate, the environment, energy, social services and financial markets are huge and urgent. None of these problems can be solved alone - it requires a coordinated approach. For the countries in the Nordic region it is natural to look for common solutions under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Thanks to the decades of cooperation, the level of the integration of the Nordic countries is high. In recent years, it has deepened to the extent, that it can be said to be experiencing a sort of renaissance, which has been expressed by a Finnish Foreign Minister Tuomioja E in these words: "For our citizens Nordic cooperation is like motherhood and apple pie, everyone is for it"<sup>24</sup>.

---

<sup>21</sup> In 2014 the budget accounts for 955.215.000 DKK. As cited at: <http://www.norden.org/en/news-and-events/news/nordic-council-of-ministers-apos-budget-2014>, [31.01.2014].

<sup>22</sup> See: <http://www.norden.org/en/about-nordic-co-operation/financing>, [23.01.2014].

<sup>23</sup> In 2014, Denmark's contribution accounts for 21%, Finland's 16.3%, Norway's 30.6% and Sweden's 31.4% of the whole budget. It is also noteworthy, that the contributions, although may differ each year, in fact fluctuate only slightly, see: <http://www.norden.org/en/news-and-events/news/nordic-council-of-ministers-apos-budget-2014>, [31.01.2014].

<sup>24</sup> E. Tuomioja, *Speech at the seminar "Nordic Security Cooperation = Smart Defence?"*, 23.11.2012, Hanasaari, <http://www.tuomioja.org/index.php?mainAction=showPage&id=1855&category=4>, [05.03.2013].

## Bibliography

1. Czarny R. M., *W nowej Europie. Słownik terminologiczny*, Kielce 2003, 2005.
2. Czarny R. M., *Dylematy energetyczne państw regionu nordyckiego*, Kielce 2009.
3. Czarny R. M., *Energy Dilemmas of the Nordic Region Countries*, Kielce 2009.
4. Czarny R. M., Tomala M., *Wymiar północny Unii Europejskiej. Studium rozwoju*, Kielce 2009.
5. Dąbrowska A., *Swedish Presidency. Interview with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden in Poland J.E. Mats Staffansson*, „Unia Europejska” no 4/2001.
6. Doliwa – Klepacki Z. M., *Integracja europejska*, Białystok 1999.
7. Doliwa – Klepacki Z.M., *Integracja europejska (po Amsterdamie i Nicei)*, Białystok 2001.
8. Marszałek A., *Rada Nordycka i Nordycka Rada Ministrów, Integracja Europejska*, ed. A. Marszałek, Łódź 1997.

### Internet sources:

9. *Programme launched for Swedish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Minister*, <http://www.government.se/sb/d/16618/a/202648>, [11.02.2014].
10. *Protocol concerning the exemption of nationals of the Nordic countries from the obligation to have a passport or residence permit while resident in a Nordic country other than their own*, <http://www.norden.org/en/about-nordic-co-operation/agreements/treaties-and-agreements/passport-issues-citizenship-and-national-registration/protocol-concerning-the-exemption-of-nationals-of-the-nordic-countries-from-the-obligation-to-have-a-passport-or-residence-permit-while-resident-in-a-nordic-country-other-than-their-own>, [25.02.2014].
11. *Recommendations, statements and internal resolutions adopted at the 49<sup>th</sup> Session 1997 of the Nordic Council*, Helsinki, November 10-13, 1997, [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org), [19.02.2014].
12. *The Nordic model in a new era Programme for the Swedish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers 2013*, [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org), [19.02.2014].
13. *The Nordic Passport Convention*, at: <http://www.norden.org/en/about-nordic-co-operation/agreements/treaties-and-agreements/passport-issues-citizenship-and-national-registration/the-nordic-passport-convention>, [25.02.2014].
14. *Vigour – Vitality. Programme for the Icelandic Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers 2014*, <http://www.norden.org/en/publications/publikationer/2013-770>, [30.01.2014].
15. <http://valhalla.norden.org/about-valhalla>, [09.03.2014].

## Abstract

Nordic co-operation has a long tradition and is deeply rooted in the thinking of the Nordic people. Over the years it has undergone several changes, yet the participating states have developed very close relationships in different sectors. This cooperation strengthens the participant countries, and emphasizes their common interests. It is worth to know the mechanisms of the regional cooperation, which on the one hand has led to close social, economic, legal and political relations and on the other to increased activity, more availability of the Nordic

region to the surrounding areas, positive relationships with the European Union and a number of sub-regional cooperation structures.

#### **Nordycka Rada Ministrów – skuteczne forum współpracy regionalnej państw**

Współpraca nordycka ma długoletnią tradycję i jest głęboko zakorzeniona w myśleniu nordyckich obywateli. Przez kolejne lata uległa wielu zmianom, a uczestniczące w niej państwa coraz silniej zbliżały się do siebie nawzajem. Współpraca ta wzmacnia kraje w niej uczestniczące i podkreśla ich wspólne interesy. Warte poznania są mechanizmy współpracy regionalnej, które z jednej strony doprowadziły do zbliżenia społecznego, gospodarczego, prawnego i politycznego, a z drugiej rozszerzyły aktywność i otworzyły region nordycki na tereny przyległe, rozwinęły pozytywne relacje z Unią Europejską oraz wieloma strukturami współpracy subregionalnej.

Joanna Grzela, Ph.D., the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Poland.