Fact Sheet - The West-Nordic Council

The **West-Nordic Council** is a parliamentary cooperation between **Iceland**, **Greenland** and the **Faroe Islands**.

VESTNORDISK RÅD

Background
The West Nordic Parliamentarian Council of Cooperation was formed in 1985. The name was changed to the West-Nordic Council in 1997 as the member parliaments approved the Council's present Charter. The Council thus celebrates its **10 years anniversary** this year.

Collectively, the nations of the North Atlantic make up a very large geographical area including enormous sea territories. The vast blue sea is to the West Nordic Countries what green fields and woodlands are to other countries. The Faeroe Islands and Iceland were populated by Norse Vikings from around the 9th century whereas the history of Greenland dates back more than 5000 years. The Norse settlers arrived in Greenland around 982 where they lived for almost 500 years.

The special cultural and geographic conditions of the Faeroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland were subject to political discussions of the early 1980s. Subsequently, the West Nordic Countries established a joint parliamentary organisation. The chief aim is to cooperate on common problems and to conduct positive and constructive cooperation regarding West-Nordic, or North Atlantic, issues with various countries and organisations.

Structure
The parliaments of the Greenland, Iceland and the Faeroe Islands each appoint six **representatives** to the West Nordic Council. The **Annual General Meeting** constitutes the Council's supreme authority. The Council's general work and activities throughout the year are organised and conducted by the **Presidium**. The Council's work is realised through **recommendations**, which are presented to the parliaments of the member countries. Subsequently, the recommendations are passed on to and executed by the appropriate minister. The purpose of the **Theme Conferences** is to clarify and to discuss subjects which the Council deems of great importance to the cooperation. The conferences also serve to provide a basis for possible recommendations to the member countries' parliaments.

Presidium
The Presidium consists of one member from each delegation. The Presidium's present members are:
Mr. Karl V. Matthíasson, President of the West-Nordic Council, MP Iceland;
Mr. Henrik Old Vice-president of the West-Nordic Council, MP the Faroe Islands;
Mr. Jonathan Motzfeldt Vice-president of the West-Nordic Council, MP and chairman of Greenland's Parliament.

Main Objectives of the Council

- To promote west Nordic (North Atlantic) interests.
- To be guardians of north Atlantic resources and north Atlantic culture and to help promoting West Nordic interests through the West-Nordic governments – not least with regards to the serious issues of resource management, pollution etc.
- To follow up on the government's West-Nordic cooperation.
- To work with the Nordic Council and to be the West-Nordic link in Nordic cooperation.
- To act as the parliamentary link for inter-west Nordic organisations, including Arctic parliamentary cooperation.

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