

# Finland's chairmanship of NORDEFCO in 2021

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which established the *Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO)* in 2009, the purpose of the cooperation is to strengthen the Participants' national defence, explore common synergies and facilitate efficient common solutions. The one-year chairmanship rotates between the Nordic countries, excluding Iceland. Finland will hold the chairmanship in 2021. The chair is responsible for leading and developing the cooperation in line with the goals outlined in NORDEFCO's long-term Vision 2025.

A number of international meetings are scheduled to take place during Finland's chairmanship in 2021. The Ministers of Defence and the *Policy Steering Committee*, which works at senior official level, usually meet twice a year, but meetings will also be held in virtual format. The permanent secretaries of the Ministries of Defence will meet once during the year. In addition, military representatives will hold several meetings in Finland. If the COVID-19 situation prevents organising physical meetings, virtual connections will be used instead.

The following four priorities will guide the cooperation during Finland's chairmanship in 2021:

## **Implementing NORDEFCO's Vision 2025**

As regards the most central goal of NORDEFCO's Vision 2025 – to improve the ability to act together in peace, crisis and conflict – Finland will continue the work in accordance with the decisions made during the Danish chairmanship. Last spring, military mobility was selected as the test project for examining possibilities for future cooperation during crises and conflicts.

The first NORDEFCO Table Top Discussion was organised during Finland's previous chairmanship in 2017. In 2020, a plan for similar exercises in the coming years was made and adopted. According to the plan, the Finnish chairmanship will organise a Table Top Discussion (TTD) at senior official level. This will be NORDEFCO's second Table Top Discussion.

## **Military security of supply, resilience and total defence**

The coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis has highlighted the significance of comprehensive security, as well as the importance of resilient armed forces and security of supply. Finland considers it important to examine the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on military security of supply, especially on defence materiel projects, defence industry and industrial base.

Cooperation in the domain of comprehensive security will be advanced by strengthening the dialogue between NORDEFCO and the Haga cooperation. Haga cooperation refers to Nordic cooperation in the area of public safety, rescue services and preparedness. The Finnish Ministry of the Interior will act as chair for the Haga cooperation in 2021.

## **European instruments, in particular the European Defence Fund, in the Nordic context**

The goals of Vision 2025 include active partnership with the Nordic defence industry and use of such relevant instruments as the European Defence Fund (EDF). The Nordic countries could enhance the information exchange on matters related to the EDF, such as the preparation of work programmes and projects. The experiences gained from the European Defence Industrial Development Programme, the precursor programme of the EDF, could be used to strengthen the interaction of the Nordic countries. The Nordic defence industry should be linked to the work.

## **Development of long-term project management**

In 2019–2020 a test round of a Long-Term Project Management Concept was planned and implemented at the military level. The aim of the concept is to improve the development of Nordic military capabilities by means of exchanging information and enhancing coordination. During its NORDEFCO chairmanship in 2021, Finland will seek to ensure that the project proceeds as planned.