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HIGH-LEVEL FORUM 2026

Setting the direction for Europe's digital future

A strategic summit on AI, competitiveness and digital sovereignty

DATE

6 November 2026

PLACE

Moltkes Palæ
Copenhagen

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Nordisk Ministerråd · TEK NORGE · AI SWEDEN · AI FINLAND · ALMANNARÓMUR · DIGITAL DOGME

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Introduction

On 6th of November 2026, senior representatives from governments, businesses, research institutions, academia and public organisations across the Nordic and Baltic countries gathered in Copenhagen for the New Nordics AI High-Level Forum 2026. The forum brought together leaders from across the region to discuss how closer Nordic-Baltic cooperation on artificial intelligence can strengthen competitiveness, safeguard strong welfare societies and contribute to Europe's digital sovereignty.

The forum took place at a pivotal moment for Europe. Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming economies, labour markets and public services, creating new opportunities for innovation, productivity and growth. At the same time, Europe's increasing dependence on technologies and digital infrastructure developed and controlled outside the continent raises fundamental questions about competitiveness, security and technological independence. Addressing these challenges requires not only national initiatives, but stronger coordination and collective action across borders.

The Nordic and Baltic countries are particularly well positioned to contribute to this agenda. With advanced digital economies, high levels of public trust, strong institutions and longstanding traditions of cooperation between governments, businesses and research communities, the region has a strong foundation for developing and adopting artificial intelligence responsibly and at scale. However, realising this potential requires a more coordinated approach to overcoming shared barriers, mobilising regional strengths and translating common ambitions into concrete initiatives.

Building on the outcomes of the Nordic-Baltic High-Level Forum on AI Readiness in 2024, the 2026 forum marked a further step towards a shared strategic direction for the region. Under the Presidency of Denmark and the Faroe Islands of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the forum provided an opportunity to identify common priorities and strengthen the basis for continued Nordic-Baltic cooperation on AI.

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From dialogue to joint recommendations

The discussions were structured around eight thematic Executive Roundtables, bringing together senior decision-makers and experts from the public and private sectors, research, education and civil society. Each roundtable addressed a specific area in which artificial intelligence presents both significant opportunities and challenges, and where closer Nordic-Baltic cooperation could create added value.

The eight roundtables focused on:

1. **Unleashing the Value of Data** - Strengthening cross-border data collaboration, interoperability and access to trusted data and language resources.
2. **Accelerating Transformation of Work** - Preparing labour markets and workforces for AI-driven change while preserving the strengths of the Nordic social model.
3. **Future-proofing Nordic Education and Competence** - Adapting education and skills development to the opportunities and demands of artificial intelligence.
4. **Strengthening AI Resilience** - Addressing strategic technological dependencies and strengthening the resilience of critical digital infrastructure.
5. **Leading AI Through Trust** - Advancing responsible AI adoption through trust, governance and cross-sector collaboration.
6. **AI Scaled in the Nordic-Baltic Health Sector** - Enabling the wider adoption and scaling of AI solutions across healthcare systems and national borders.
7. **Data Centers, AI and the Energy System** - Exploring how AI infrastructure and data centres can support a more flexible and resilient energy system.
8. **The Next Three Unicorns** - Strengthening the conditions for turning Nordic-Baltic AI research, innovation and talent into globally competitive companies.

Across these discussions, participants were asked to move beyond identifying challenges and towards defining concrete opportunities for joint action. Particular emphasis was placed on initiatives where cooperation across the Nordic and Baltic countries could deliver greater impact than individual national efforts.

The recommendations presented in this document reflect the discussions and priorities identified during the eight Executive Roundtables. They are intended to provide concrete input to the continued political dialogue on artificial intelligence and to inform the strategic priorities and future work programme of New Nordics AI.

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A shared commitment to action

The High-Level Forum 2026 reinforced the importance of sustained Nordic-Baltic cooperation in shaping the development and adoption of artificial intelligence. While the countries of the region face different national circumstances, many of the opportunities and challenges associated with AI are shared. By combining their strengths, the Nordic and Baltic countries have an opportunity to play a more influential role in shaping Europe's digital future.

The recommendations that follow are presented as a contribution to this shared ambition and as a basis for further dialogue, collaboration and concrete action across the region.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all participants, roundtable leaders, speakers and partners who contributed their time, expertise and perspectives to the High-Level Forum 2026. Their engagement and willingness to identify common priorities have been essential to the development of the recommendations presented in this document.

We also thank the Nordic Council of Ministers and the partners of New Nordics AI for their continued commitment to strengthening Nordic-Baltic cooperation on artificial intelligence.

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Policy recommendations

Roundtable 1: Unleashing the Value of Data

The roundtable explored how stronger cross-border cooperation on data, language resources and interoperability can unlock the region's potential for AI development and create a shared Nordic-Baltic advantage.

1 Give national institutions a mandate and sustained funding to make language resources usable across borders

Nordic and Baltic governments should designate the institutions responsible for this work and ask them to agree on common terms for using text and speech collections to train and evaluate AI. Those terms should make clear who can use the material, for what purpose and under what conditions. Funding should cover checking permissions, preparing and documenting collections, and keeping them up to date. The first test of success is whether an organisation in a second country actually reuses a collection under the agreed terms.

Roundtable 2: Accelerating Transformation of Work

The roundtable examined how AI is transforming working life and how the Nordic labour market model, built on trust and social dialogue, can support upskilling, retraining and responsible adaptation to technological change.

1 Accelerate the transformation of work while building on Nordic-Baltic strengths

Nordic-Baltic governments should make the transformation of work a shared policy priority, building on the region's high levels of trust, shared values and strong tradition of dialogue and participation. Employees, leaders and social partners should play an active role in shaping how AI transforms work, ensuring that technological progress translates into higher productivity, better quality of work and broader societal value. To maintain these strengths in the age of AI, governments must also accelerate the adaptation of education, lifelong learning and welfare systems, ensuring that institutions and skills evolve alongside technological change.

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Roundtable 3: Future-proofing Nordic-Baltic Education and Competence

The roundtable explored how AI can shape the future of education, what skills students must continue to develop independently, and how education systems can adapt to new technologies while ensuring meaningful learning.

1 Establish a common Northern Star for AI in education

Nordic-Baltic governments should establish a shared Northern Star for AI in education, setting a positive vision for the future that puts people and empowerment at its centre. Children and young people should be actively involved in shaping this vision and discussing what kind of future they want AI to help create. A common Northern Star would provide a shared direction for developing education systems that prepare and empower future generations in the age of AI.

2 Embrace experimentation and knowledge sharing across the Nordic-Baltic region

Nordic-Baltic governments should embrace experimentation and strengthen collaboration on AI in education. This should include reforming national frameworks to avoid fragmentation and creating better opportunities to test new approaches, share experiences and learn from each other across borders. Stronger Nordic-Baltic cooperation would help accelerate innovation and ensure that successful solutions can be adopted and scaled across the region.

3 Develop a Northern Start for AI model reflecting our languages, cultures and values

Nordic-Baltic governments should jointly develop a Northern AI model, building on existing frontier models and adapting them to reflect the region's languages, cultures and shared values. The model should serve as a common foundation for AI in education, providing students and teachers with tools that understand the Nordic-Baltic context. A shared model would support the responsible use of AI in education while strengthening the region's technological capabilities.

Roundtable 4: Strengthening AI Resilience

The roundtable examined the region's dependence on AI technologies and infrastructure controlled outside Europe, and how Nordic-Baltic cooperation can reduce critical vulnerabilities and strengthen collective resilience.

1 Strengthen Nordic-Baltic AI resilience and reduce critical dependencies

Nordic-Baltic governments should jointly map critical services that depend on AI technologies and providers outside the region and test whether these services can be transferred to alternative solutions, including smaller or open-source models. Countries should coordinate resilience planning across borders, recognising that disruptions to critical infrastructure in one country can affect the entire region. This should include developing shared approaches to managing dependencies and ensuring that essential services can continue operating if external providers become unavailable.

2 Strengthen regional AI capabilities through procurement and strategic investment

Nordic-Baltic governments should actively support regional AI providers by creating incentives for public procurement of solutions developed by Nordic-Baltic startups and reducing the risks associated with adopting new technologies. This should be complemented by joint efforts to develop AI models tailored to Nordic-Baltic languages and critical sectors, including defence, energy and connectivity. At the European level, countries should support a common roadmap for semiconductor and GPU capabilities to reduce dependencies across the AI value chain.

3 Protect public data and strengthen the region's negotiating position

Nordic-Baltic governments should ensure that public data remains under regional control and is not exchanged as payment for access to AI services. Decisions concerning access to and use of public data should remain with the responsible authorities in the region. Governments should also explore how Nordic-Baltic data assets and Europe's strategic industries, including telecommunications, can be used collectively to strengthen their negotiating position with global technology providers.

Roundtable 5: Leading AI Through Trust

The roundtable explored how the region's shared values and high levels of trust can support responsible AI adoption, with a focus on common approaches to governance, testing and evaluation across borders.

1 Establish a joint Nordic-Baltic framework for continuous AI testing and evaluation

Nordic-Baltic governments should establish a shared framework for continuously testing and evaluating AI systems in the context of the region's languages, institutions and public services. Building on existing European legislation, the framework should enable countries to develop common evaluation methods, share test results and exchange best practices across borders. A coordinated approach would reduce duplication, strengthen the reliability and trustworthiness of AI systems, and ensure that AI solutions are evaluated against the specific needs and conditions of Nordic-Baltic societies.

2 Invest in sovereign AI solutions and secure Nordic-Baltic infrastructure

Nordic-Baltic governments should jointly invest in sovereign AI solutions and infrastructure to strengthen the region's technological independence and resilience. This should include establishing a shared definition of what constitutes a secure AI environment and infrastructure, with clear principles for data protection, ownership and control. A coordinated approach would enable countries to pool resources, reduce critical dependencies on external providers and build a secure foundation for AI development and adoption across the region.

Roundtable 6: AI Scaled in the Nordic-Baltic Health Sector

The roundtable examined how proven AI solutions can move beyond individual hospitals and national borders, overcoming barriers to adoption and creating a more connected Nordic-Baltic healthcare ecosystem.

1 Accelerate cross-border adoption and knowledge sharing of validated AI solutions in health and social care – solutions validated in one country can be used in another

Nordic-Baltic governments should consider tasking their national health and medical device authorities with developing common approaches to evaluating, validating and adopting AI solutions in healthcare. These should clarify what evidence a solution needs before it is used in routine care, how its performance is monitored over time, and how evidence from one country can be reused in another. A coordinated approach would allow proven solutions, such as stroke diagnostics or breast cancer screening, to travel across the region, rather than every hospital or region repeating the same work.

2 Enable a joint approach to more dynamic procurement models and long-term funding for AI in healthcare

Nordic-Baltic governments should consider making it easier for hospitals and regions to procure proven AI solutions jointly across borders, building on the 2024 recommendation to coordinate critical tenders and use the combined purchasing power of the region. This should include funding models that allow solutions to move from short-term pilot budgets to routine operation, including the competence, change management and time healthcare organisations need to adapt. A larger, coordinated market would make it easier to scale solutions across the region.

Roundtable 7: Data Center, AI and the Energy System

The roundtable explored how growing demand for AI infrastructure affects the energy system, and how data centres can contribute greater flexibility while addressing challenges related to limited grid capacity.

1 Establish flexible grid connections and harmonised Nordic queue rules

Nordic energy ministers should task national energy regulators, through NordREG, and transmission system operators (TSOs) with developing common principles for flexible grid connections and harmonised queue management across the region. This should include greater transparency in connection queues, mechanisms to discourage companies from holding unused capacity reservations, and common approaches to managing grid access. The aim should be to ensure more efficient use of existing grid capacity, reduce unnecessary delays and create predictable, industry-neutral conditions for data centres and other large electricity users.

2 Develop a shared Nordic fact base and classification of data centres

The Nordic Council of Ministers, through Nordic Energy Research and in collaboration with industry, should establish a shared fact base on data centres and their role in the energy system. Any common classification should align with existing and forthcoming EU requirements to avoid overlapping frameworks. The work should build on existing reporting and use aggregated, anonymised data without requiring companies to disclose commercially sensitive information. This would provide a clearer picture of data centre development, support evidence-based policy decisions and strengthen Nordic coordination.

3 Coordinate energy and digital infrastructure planning across the Nordic-Baltic region

The Nordic Council of Ministers responsible for energy and digitalisation, together with the Baltic countries, should develop a joint action plan to align energy infrastructure planning with the growing demand for data centres and AI computing capacity. This should include identifying geographic zones suitable for new digital infrastructure, particularly locations close to available power generation and grid

capacity. A coordinated approach would help optimise infrastructure investments, reduce pressure on constrained electricity grids and ensure that the region's energy and digital ambitions develop together.

Roundtable 8: The Next Three Unicorns

The roundtable examined the barriers preventing Nordic-Baltic AI startups from scaling globally and how stronger regional cooperation can turn research, innovation and talent into internationally competitive companies.

1 Harmonise and simplify regulation to create a single Nordic-Baltic market for AI

Nordic-Baltic governments should work towards a more harmonised and simplified regulatory environment that enables AI companies to scale across the region without facing unnecessary administrative barriers. This should include aligning the implementation and interpretation of EU regulations, streamlining approval processes and working towards mutual recognition of approvals across national markets. Companies that have already received regulatory approval to provide AI solutions in one Nordic-Baltic country, for example in the healthcare sector, should benefit from fast-track approval processes in other countries across the region. A more coordinated approach would reduce regulatory friction, avoid duplication and make it easier for AI companies to operate and grow across the Nordic-Baltic region as one integrated market.

2 Position the Nordic-Baltic region as a leading market for AI development and investment

Nordic-Baltic governments should jointly position the region as an attractive destination for international AI talent, investment and innovation. Building on highly digitalised societies, strong public institutions and high levels of trust, the region should offer a shared testbed where international companies can develop, pilot and validate AI solutions across multiple markets. A coordinated approach to attracting talent and investment would strengthen the region's position as a competitive environment for AI development and deployment.

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The High-Level Forum is organised by New Nordics AI in close collaboration with the Nordic Council of Ministers, under the Danish and Faroese Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers.