

Webinar on COVID-19 in the Nordic countries with special focus on vaccinations

Monday 1 March 2021 at 13:00 Helsinki time (12:00 CET)

Platform: Teams

Participants: Nordic delegations of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (Members of Parliament from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden)

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit the Nordic countries each chose their strategies to combat the pandemic, balancing different societal aspects e.g. economic and social, with containing the virus. Countries have applied different measures to do this, some stricter than others. With the Nordic countries striving to become the most integrated area in the world, we have also had exchange of information and views about possible actions between our countries. However, differing strategies have been applied.

The webinar starts by looking at the situation in Nordic countries and the perceptions we had of the situation in the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic. We will discuss the coordination of the responses between countries. The arrival of vaccines has brought us hope of returning to normalcy. An exact timetable of this is still difficult to predict. In Finland, for instance, the national corona vaccination strategy is to vaccinate the population as a contingency plan against a pandemic as soon as an effective and safe vaccine is available. Vaccinations are free of charge for everyone with a predetermined order of administering the vaccinations. Roughly the same applies in all Nordic countries and the majority in all countries is willing to get vaccinated.

Leading questions to be considered:

- How do you see coordination between Nordic countries – Do you think the picture of the pandemic should be more unified in our countries and the measures better coordinated?
- What could have been done better and what are the lessons learned so far?
- We know that it is difficult to predict a percentage share of the population that we have to vaccinate in order to reach herd immunity. Could you explain the factors behind this?
- Could you elaborate on the progress of the vaccination strategy and possible introduction of corona passes?
- Finland gave up its own vaccine production in 2003. In retrospect it can be debated whether it was a good decision. Do you think we could see joint Nordic vaccine production in the future?

Programme

1 March 2021

13:00 Welcome and opening words, Ms. Heli Järvinen, MP, Chair of the Finnish IPU Group

13:05 Overview of Covid-19 pandemic in DK, SE, NO and DE, Jørgen Grønnegård Christensen, Professor Emeritus at Aarhus University

13:20 Report of the Swedish Covid Commission, Mr. Mats Melin, Chair of the Swedish Covid Commission

13:35 Discussion and comments

13:50 Vaccinations: Vaccination strategies, vaccine passes, vaccine development and general preparedness in the future, Ms. Hanna Nohynek, Chief Medical Officer, Team Leader of Vaccine Programme Development at the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL)

14:05 Discussion and comments

14:30 Closing words Ms. Cecilia Widegren, Chair of the Swedish IPU Group, Member of IPU Executive Committee
