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Nordic Developments at a glance – Turkey temporarily suspends veto of Swedish and Finnish NATO accession. Swedish voters begin to prepare for parliamentary election in the Fall. Arctic countries preoccupied with whether cooperation without Russia is possible.

Turkey's Opposition to Swedish and Finnish NATO-membership removed

For the Nordic countries one of the key developments during the NATO-summit in Madrid was the meeting between Turkey's president and his Swedish and Finnish counterparts during the recent NATO-summit in Madrid was of the utmost importance.

Following negotiations on the sidelines of the summit Tuesday evening saw the signing of a [trilateral agreement](#).

The provisions of the agreement include guarantees that Sweden and Finland will in no way support either the YPG/PYD, a majority Kurdish militia which played a key role in defeating the so-called Islamic State in Syria, or the Gülen movement. The Swedish government also confirms in the document that it will seek to pass a new Terrorist Offences Act on July 1st and will move towards introducing new measures to combat terrorism. Stockholm will also change its arms export requirements, in order to resume supplying Ankara with weapons. In exchange, Turkey will support the efforts of the two Nordic countries to join the NATO-alliance.

Members of the Swedish delegation in Madrid appeared visibly relieved by the news that Turkey's veto had been lifted. Yet the process of going from applicant status to full-fledged membership may still be drawn out, particularly as the contents of the trilateral agreement are not legally binding and open to interpretation. Whether it will be politically acceptable in Sweden to extradite journalists and activists which Ankara considers to be terrorists remains to be seen. But the diplomatic tensions between Turkey, Sweden and Finland appear to have eased for the time being.

Swedish Politics in the run up to the Election on September 11

The governing Social democrats (S) continue to enjoy stable approval ratings. According to the polling agency [Pollofpolls.se](#), some 32% of voters would give the party their mandate, an increase of approximately three percentage points compared to November 2021. One explanation for the increased approval is the charisma and crisis management skill of Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson during the NATO-accession debate and the Ukraine War. The polls also place the approval rating of the conservative Moderates (M) at 20% and that of the right-wing nationalist Sweden Democrats (SD) at 17%. Should the environmentalist Miljöpartiet (MP) fail to garner enough votes to enter parliament, which at present seems likely, current trend could translate into a slim

majority for a center-right coalition of the Moderates, Sweden Democrats, Liberals and Christian Democrats opposing a center-left block composed of the Social Democrats, Left and Center Parties.

According to polls by [Sentio](#), [Ipsos](#) und [TNS-Sifo](#) the Liberals (L) have been able to strengthen their position. One reason for this is the new party leader Johan Pehrsson who has been in office since April. A recent upswing in the polls has been attributed to his charismatic public appearances increasing confidence in the party's electability.

Current polling suggest that a majority of Swedish voters are interested in solutions to domestic and social policy issues. According to a poll by Ipsos, 60% of respondents cited the political establishment's response to crime and law& order issues as a primary motivating factor for their electoral decisions. In addition, some 58% indicated healthcare, 42% education and 40% high inflations rates as key election issues. Only 30% of respondents indicated climate change and environmental issues as a priority. Interestingly, the same poll indicated that despite the war in Ukraine and the NATO-accession debate only 26% of respondents indicated security and defense policy as important for the elections.

Possible Arctic Cooperation in A7 Format

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine international cooperation in the Arctic Council has all but ceased. Russia, which currently holds the rotating chairmanship of the council, had been poised to serve as the host country for a series of ministerial meetings and conference on the subject of Arctic cooperation. These will no longer take part with international attendees. The other member states of the council, a group informally known as the A7 which have all strongly condemned Moscow's aggression against Ukraine, have gradually been exploring new forms of collaboration, although it remains unclear what an Arctic cooperation which excludes Russia, by far the largest Arctic state, could look like.

The prospects for effective joint work on such pressing issues as polar research, climate change mitigation, and dealing with the effects of increased human activity in the Arctic, have been further complicated by the Russian governments threats against Finland and Sweden, both members of the Arctic Council, over their aspirations to join NATO. For Moscow and its geopolitical aims the development of energy and strategic infrastructure in the high north is of the utmost importance.