

**PRESIDIUM OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY,
THE BENELUX PARLIAMENT AND THE NORDIC COUNCIL**

**JOINT STATEMENT OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY, THE BENELUX PARLIAMENT AND
THE NORDIC COUNCIL ON DIGITALIZATION**

- All over the world, developments in the field of digitalization (including artificial intelligence) are rapidly accelerating to the benefit of citizens and the green transition.
- Digitalization offers many opportunities, but they require a debate about public values, fundamental rights, protection of the individual and how countries, administrations and citizens should deal with these developments.
- Cooperation between countries and regions concerning digitalization is important both for systems to be operable in an ever more connected and globalised world, but also to learn from each other through cooperation and innovative solutions. Cooperation in Europe will also contribute to strengthening Europe's position in the field of digitalization, not least through the European Union, which has made digitalization one of the main priorities for the Union and in 2020 launched the strategy “Europe Fit for the Digital Age”. Furthermore, a fragmented approach leads to higher costs and undesirable differences and border effects between countries.
- The Baltic, Benelux and the Nordic states have all demonstrated their ambitions in the field of digitalization. For example, in 2016 the Prime Ministers of the three Benelux Member States issued a joint statement underlining the ambition and potential of the three countries to be digital pioneers and to act as role models in promoting the digital single market within the European Union. In October 2020, the ministers responsible for digital development in the Nordic and Baltic countries adopted The Ministerial Declaration Digital North 2.0 that builds on the common priorities of the Nordic-Baltic countries and follows the previous ministerial declaration, Digital North 2017-2020, the Nordic Prime Ministers’ 5G Letter of Intent, the Nordic-Baltic AI Declaration, and the vision for the Nordic Council of Ministers, Our Vision 2030.
- The three parliamentary assemblies have actively taken up the theme of digitalization. The Baltic Assembly adopted several recommendations on artificial intelligence and digitalization in 2020. For example, one of the recommendations deals with the development of common digital infrastructure in the three Baltic states. The Nordic Countries have launched a common vision for 2030 which has a goal of being the most integrated region in the world, including digital integration. This can only be achieved by working with like-minded regions and partners. At the end of 2019, the Benelux Parliament adopted a recommendation entitled "The Benelux as a digital forerunner in Europe".

- The Baltic Assembly, the Benelux Parliament and the Nordic Council declare that they want to cooperate and exchange experiences concerning developments in the field of digitalization, jointly identify challenges in the field of digitalization, and learn from each other's solutions to strengthen parliamentary cooperation.
- The Baltic Assembly, the Benelux Parliament and the Nordic Council are further shaping the cooperation on digitalization by informing each other on recommendations they have adopted and relevant developments in their regions, by inviting each other to meetings on the theme of digitalization such as the recent webinar hosted by the Nordic Council and the European Parliament in March 2021 on digitalization. The three parliamentary assemblies are also welcoming joint activities in the field of digitalization.

**Presidium
Baltic Assembly**

**Presidium
Benelux Parliament**

**Presidium
Nordic Council**

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