Policy areas of priority

Cohesion policy
Jämtland Härjedalen and Västernorrland are supportive of a cohesion policy focused on the most vulnerable regions but including all parts of the EU. Jämtland Härjedalen and Västernorrland, as part of the European Arctic, have special challenges and opportunities. The EU has recognized this through the special ERDF allocation to sparsely populated regions in the north of Finland and Sweden, enabling our regions to contribute more to European growth and jobs.

“The population in Jämtland Härjedalen is small and dispersed over a large area, which has consequences in terms of our administrative capacity. That’s why European Cohesion Policy is so important, as it gives us possibilities to strengthen our capacity to work strategically with regional development” says Robert Uitto, Regional Councillor of Jämtland Härjedalen.

ERDF-funding has been used for things such as research, education, accessibility and broadband connectivity in Jämtland Härjedalen and Västernorrland, and has shifted opinions in this historically eurosceptic region.

Transport infrastructure
Västernorrland and Jämtland Härjedalen are located in the centre of the Nordic region but are often left out when considering mobility. For example, the Scandinavian-Mediterranean Corridor of the TEN-T stops at Stockholm, leaving Northern Sweden out of the picture.

But Jämtland Härjedalen are important sources and transit areas for natural resources and high-tech products. About 90% of the iron produced in the EU comes from Sweden, the vast majority of it from northern Sweden. Northern Sweden is also a major producer of wood, pulp and paper. Moreover, infrastructure is especially important for regional development in sparsely populated areas such as Jämtland Härjedalen and Västernorrland. Jämtland Härjedalen and Västernorrland are supportive of an ambitious CEF and TEN-T which includes northern Sweden and the Bothnian Corridor.

Environment, Energy & Climate Change
Jämtland Härjedalen and Västernorrland have strong forestry industries and resources that can contribute to achieving a fossil-free Europe. Jämtland Härjedalen and Västernorrland support the development of the circular economy and the bioeconomy, taking into account the contribution of forest products.

Mid Sweden European Office
Mid Sweden European Office represents the regional councils of Jämtland Härjedalen and Västernorrland, as well as the Association of Local Authorities in the county of Västernorrland in Brussels, specifically in the priority policy areas of cohesion policy and transport infrastructure. The office supports the regions in their representations in the networks Europaforum North Sweden (EFNS) and Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA).

Webpage: www.midsweden.se

@midsweden
**Strong cooperation in the north**

**Europaforum North Sweden – EFNS**

Europaforum North Sweden (EFNS) is a network of political representatives at the local and regional levels of Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Västernorrland and Jämtland Härjedalen. EFNS is a meeting place and knowledge arena where EU policies are analysed and discussed with regard to their impact on Northern Sweden. EFNS monitors European issues and works to influence EU legislation, EU strategies and action programmes, as well as the EU budget. The purpose of EFNS is to safeguard the interests of Northern Sweden in the European arena and within Sweden on issues with a clear European perspective.

**Northern Sparsely Populated Areas – NSPA**

The NSPA network represents close collaboration between the four northernmost counties of Sweden (Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Jämtland Härjedalen, and Västernorrland), the seven northernmost and eastern regions of Finland (Lapland, Northern Ostrobothnia, Central Ostrobothnia, Kainuu, North Karelia, Pohjois-Savo and South Savo) and North Norway (Finnmark, Troms and Nordland).

These 14 regions from three countries share common circumstances and objectives and are working together to raise awareness of the NSPA in the EU institutions, to influence EU policy and to provide a platform for best practice. The regions of northern Finland, Norway and Sweden have many common circumstances such as sparse population, harsh climate and long distances. This part of Europe is also specifically affected by globalisation, climate change and demographic change.

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**Västernorrland**

**Quick facts**
- Area: 22,957 km²
- Population: 245,572
- Population density: 11.4/km²

**Did you know?**
- Västernorrland is the origin of 80% of the global production of “Surströmming” (fermented Baltic Sea herring)
- Västernorrland is the geographical centre of Sweden and has historical ties to both Norway and Finland.

Västernorrland's landscape is characterized by three rivers snaking through deep forests with plenty of game and berries. Västernorrland is the geographical centre of Sweden and has historical ties to both Norway and Finland. In Västernorrland old meets new. Näsåker boasts one of the largest collections of Stone Age rock-carvings in Northern Europe, Sundsvall’s “Stone City” is a testament to the booming forest economy of the 19th century and Västernorrland has Sweden’s biggest cluster of IT, finance and insurance businesses outside of the metropolitan regions. Businesses in Västernorrland play a key role in Sweden's process industry, have a cutting-edge bioeconomy cluster and the region is a key producer of pulp and paper products as well as heavy machinery.

**Jämtland Härjedalen**

**Quick facts**
- Area: 53,752 km²
- Population: 128,673
- Population density: 2.6/km²

**Did you know?**
- The local dialect Jamtish is a unique mix of Swedish and Norwegian due to the historical ties with Norway.
- Jämtland Härjedalen covers an area larger than the Netherlands.

Jämtland Härjedalen is rich in contrasts with pristine landscapes, world-class sport facilities and leading hubs within sports research. It is a hotspot for young entrepreneurship and the region offers world-class gastronomy and culture. The biggest alpine sport destinations in Sweden are in Jämtland Härjedalen, and world championships are regularly held in everything from biathlon to sled dog racing.

Jämtland Härjedalen has a high degree of small and newly established companies, many of these in the areas of food production. The capital of the region, Östersund, has been named by UNESCO a City of Gastronomy. Sámi culture is also very present in Jämtland Härjedalen, with a total of 12 Sámi villages and around 44,000 reindeer.

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