
5. The domestic background: public opinion and party attitudes towards integration in the Nordic countries

Cynthia Kite

I. Introduction

In chapter 4, Lee Miles discusses some of the basic similarities of the Nordic countries as regards their foreign policy orientations. These include a commitment to an internationalism that emphasizes international law and the United Nations, a sense of being part of a region, an emphasis on soft security and scepticism about federalism as a desirable way for Europe to develop. He also discusses the usefulness of the ‘fusion’ approach to studying Nordic views on and evaluations of developments in the European Security and Defence Policy.

This chapter focuses on other domestic factors. First, it provides background on the views of the political parties and of public opinion in the Nordic countries during the respective debates on membership of the European Union. Second, it discusses current opinion on the development and direction of the EU. Finally, it addresses the possible implications of these factors for Nordic participation in security and defence cooperation.

II. The question of membership of the EU

In the 1960s and 1970s, in the wake of the United Kingdom’s decision to apply for membership of the European Community (EC), the Nordic countries began to discuss the issue of EC membership for themselves. On the one hand, in Denmark and Norway whether or not to join was largely a question of economics and political authority. The economic aspect of the question was whether the country or its citizens would stand to win or lose economically. Politically, the question related to the implications of membership for policy-making authority and national sovereignty more generally. Security and defence issues were not particularly important for the Danish and Norwegian parties or citizens in their evaluation of the benefits and drawbacks of EC membership. In Finland and Sweden, on the other hand, the question of membership was shaped by security considerations. In both countries, relations with the EC were perceived as subordinate to security policy, and the question was: what relationship with the EC was compatible with neutrality? For Finland, since membership was obviously unacceptable to the Soviet Union, it was a non-issue. In Sweden the dominant view—despite occasional objections from the centre-right

Moderate Party and the Liberal Party—was that neutrality was incompatible with membership, which was therefore out of the question. Support for neutrality was so strong that the decision not to seek EC membership was largely uncontroversial. Finland and Sweden were thus spared the domestic political confrontations that Denmark and, particularly, Norway experienced in the 1960s and 1970s.

Danish public opinion data from the early 1960s show that 45–55 per cent of respondents expressed support for joining the Common Market.¹ Relatively few (around 10 per cent) were opposed outright, but over 40 per cent were unsure. From 1970 the pattern changed, with support starting to decline: between 1970 and the late summer of 1972 support was on average about 40 per cent while opposition rose from 9 per cent to about 30 per cent. The undecided group fell from 40 per cent to about 25 per cent.

The issue was most problematic for the Social Democratic Party. Although the party itself favoured membership, some members opposed it and they made their opposition clear in debates in the Danish Parliament and by voting against approving the treaty of accession in September 1972.² The party's voters were also split, with about half in favour of membership and half opposed. The issue was less problematic for other parties. The Socialist People's Party and its voters were solidly opposed. The liberal Venstre party, the Social-Liberal Party and the Conservative People's Party were in favour, as were their supporters. From 1970 to 1972, of those Danes who had a position on membership, the majority were always favourable—at times over 60 per cent were favourable. Given this, it is not surprising that voters approved membership by a large margin—by 63 per cent to 37 per cent—in the referendum of October 1972. Voter turnout was 90 per cent.

Norwegian public opinion data illustrate that support for membership has always been lower than in Denmark and opposition to membership always higher.³ In Norway, of those expressing an opinion, only 30 per cent favoured membership in mid-1971, down from just over 50 per cent in 1970. The same pattern was observable in the 1990s, when support was about 50 per cent in 1991–92 but down to 35 per cent by 1993.

As regards political parties, there are also important differences between Denmark and Norway.⁴ Historically, party opposition to membership in Denmark was largely a phenomenon of the left. In Norway party opposition has always come from both the left and centre and occasionally, if briefly, from the Progress Party on the right. As in Denmark, both the Socialist Left Party and

¹ Kite, C., *Scandinavia Faces EU: Debates and Decisions on Membership 1961–94*, Research Report no. 1996:2 (Umeå University, Department of Political Science: Umeå, 1996), pp. 149–52. Public opinion and voting data may not add up to 100% due to rounding of figures and blank or spoiled votes.

² The text of the Treaty Concerning the Accession of the Kingdom of Denmark, Ireland, the Kingdom of Norway and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community, signed on 22 Jan. 1972, is available at URL <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/search/treaties_accession.html>.

³ Kite (note 1), pp. 157–64.

⁴ Kite (note 1), pp. 92–117, 132–33, 153–57, 165–76.

groups in the Norwegian Labour Party opposed membership. In addition, the Centre Party and its voters have been firmly opposed to membership since the 1960s. The Christian Democratic Party and its voters were split on the issue in the 1960s and 1970s and opposed membership in the 1990s. The liberal Venstre party and its voters were also divided over EC membership—and the party split in the 1970s after the referendum. In Norway opposition is thus broader and is found throughout both the political left–right and geographical centre–periphery spectra. It is hardly surprising that Norwegians have rejected membership twice—on 25 September 1972 by a vote of 53.5 to 46.5 per cent and on 28 November 1994 by 52.2 to 47.8 per cent.

In Sweden there was little political opposition from the traditional parties to applying for EU membership once the cold war had ended in 1989. All parties except the Left and Green parties favoured membership. On the other hand, developments in public opinion resembled those in Norway.⁵ There was considerable support for membership in 1990: 63 per cent were positive and only 15 per cent negative, with 21 per cent undecided. However, by May 1993, after negotiations on the details of membership and as public campaigns in the run-up to the referendum on EU membership started, only 31 per cent were in favour and 45 per cent were opposed (24 per cent were undecided). In 1991, among those with an opinion, 70 per cent were in favour, but in 1993 only 41 per cent were (i.e., 59 per cent were opposed). Large groups of voters from several parties that favoured EU membership were opposed, including supporters of the Social Democratic, Centre and Christian Democrat parties. While the agricultural sector in Denmark has always favoured membership and that in Norway always opposed it, in Sweden those working in agriculture were split. Many were undecided about membership in May 1993, and of those with an opinion 45 per cent were opposed and 55 per cent in favour.

In its support for EU membership, Sweden falls between Denmark and Norway: it was neither as positive as Denmark, nor as negative as Norway. This is clear from the 13 November 1994 referendum vote in which 52 per cent were in favour and 47 per cent against. This trend is also reflected in public opinion data and in party politics. Compared to Denmark, in Sweden there was less support for membership from the centre of the Swedish political spectrum. At first, the Centre Party supported negotiations but refused to unequivocally support membership before knowing the terms, and Centre Party voters were not enthusiastic about membership. Similarly, while the leadership of the Christian Democrats supported membership, their voters were not equally supportive. On the other hand, Sweden did not have parties of the political centre that were unequivocally opposed, as did Norway.

In Finland public opinion throughout the period 1991–94 was more supportive of membership than opinion in Norway and Sweden.⁶ An average of about

⁵ Kite (note 1), pp. 176–80.

⁶ Pesonen, P., Jenssen, A. T. and Gilljam, M., 'To join or not to join', eds A. T. Jenssen, P. Pesonen and M. Gilljam, *To Join or Not to Join: Three Nordic Referendums on Membership in the European Union* (Scandinavian University Press: Oslo, 1998), pp. 18–19.

45 per cent supported membership during this period (34 per cent were opposed, while 22 per cent were undecided). During the same period support in Sweden was about 35 per cent (with 22 per cent undecided) and in Norway about 32 per cent (also with 22 per cent undecided). The big Finnish political parties—the Social Democratic Party, the conservative National Coalition party and the Centre Party—supported EU membership.⁷ Party opposition came from two small parties on the right—the Finnish Rural Party (renamed the True Finns in 1995) and the Christian Democrats. The Left Alliance and the Green League took no position on membership before the 16 October 1994 referendum. The Centre Party behaved somewhat like its Swedish counterpart: it was supportive but vacillating, or at least reserved and cautious. It supported negotiations but argued that a firm position on membership was possible only after the terms of accession were known. This approach can be explained by the fact that the party's supporters—farmers and rural populations—opposed EU membership. The Centre Party voted to support membership at a party conference in June 1994 after Esko Aho, the Prime Minister, threatened to resign as party chairman. The Finnish farmers association, the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners, like its Norwegian counterpart, went on record against membership and was active in the 'No' campaign.⁸ In the referendum on EU membership, 60 per cent of Centre Party sympathizers voted against membership. The referendum results were 57 per cent in favour of membership and 43 per cent opposed. Voter turnout was considerably lower in Finland (74 per cent) than in Sweden (83 per cent) and Norway (89 per cent).

In summary, as regards the question of EU membership, the parallel features in the four Nordic countries discussed here were: (a) opposition on the left, including in the social democratic parties, although the Finnish Left Alliance did not formally oppose membership; (b) greater support for membership among party leaderships than among voters; and (c) a clear geographical centre-periphery split in Finland, Norway and Sweden. An important difference among the four countries concerned the respective positions of parties and voters in the political centre, particularly rural populations and parties and organizations representing the agricultural sector.

III. Current Nordic attitudes towards the EU

This section presents recent data on party and public attitudes towards the European Union and towards EU-based security and defence cooperation in the three Nordic member states of the EU. As regards political parties, recent research shows that there is considerable variation across the Nordic countries in the share of the vote that Euro-sceptical parties receive in national parlia-

⁷ Pesonen, Jenssen and Gilljam (note 6), pp. 62–63.

⁸ Pesonen, Jenssen and Gilljam (note 6), pp. 67–68.

mentary elections.⁹ The term ‘Euro-sceptical’ refers to parties that oppose membership and those that are mainly sceptical and critical as regards the EU but which do not demand that the country leave the EU. In the most recent elections, these parties’ proportion of the vote was highest in Denmark, at almost 40 per cent, followed by 21 per cent in Sweden and only 6 per cent in Finland. There are currently two anti-EU parties in the Danish Parliament—the right-wing Danish People’s Party and the Red–Green Alliance. All parties in the Finnish Parliament support membership. The Finnish Centre Party’s degree of pro-Europeanism varies depending upon whether or not it is in government, but it is firmly committed to EU membership. The Finnish Green League has become considerably more favourable to the EU since 1995, even calling for EU legislation on minimum standards in social, environmental and tax policy.¹⁰ In Sweden, the Left and Green parties are anti-EU. While the Swedish Centre Party does not oppose membership, it does oppose Sweden’s adopting the euro.

Turning to political participation, in national elections Nordic citizens are exceptionally participatory. Voter turnout in parliamentary elections in recent years has been well over 80 per cent in both Denmark and Sweden and over 65 per cent in Finland.¹¹ In contrast, Nordic citizens are considerably less interested in participating in EU elections. Voter turnout in EU parliamentary elections in June 2004 was 48 per cent in Denmark, 37 per cent in Sweden and 41 per cent in Finland.¹²

As regards public opinion, data from a 2003 Eurobarometer poll show that, of the three Nordic EU members, Denmark is more positive about the EU than Finland and Sweden (see table 5.1). This is true as regards both overall views of the EU and, in particular, common foreign and defence policies; indeed, Danes are more favourable to the EU than the average in the EU15 (the EU members prior to the May 2004 enlargement).¹³ At the same time, they are less enthusiastic about cooperation on foreign policy and defence than the EU15 average. Swedes are generally more negative than Finns, and both are more negative than the EU15 average. This is true as regards both the overall evaluation of the EU and the attitude to foreign and defence cooperation.

Historically, Danes have always been the ‘least reluctant’ Europeans in the Nordic region, which is somewhat puzzling. For one thing, compared to opposition to the EC in the 1970s and 1980s, which was mainly a phenomenon on the left in Denmark, today there is also opposition from the right by the Danish

⁹ Raunio, T., ‘Holding governments accountable in European affairs: explaining cross-national variation’, *Journal of Legislative Studies*, vol. 11, nos 3–4 (Oct.–Dec. 2005), pp. 315–42.

¹⁰ Raunio, T. and Wiberg, M., ‘Building elite consensus: parliamentary accountability in Finland’, eds T. Bergman and E. Damgaard, *Delegation and Accountability in European Integration: The Nordic Parliamentary Democracies and the European Union* (Frank Cass: London, 2000), p. 62.

¹¹ International Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance (IDEA), International IDEA voter turnout website, URL <<http://www.idea.int/vt/>>.

¹² International Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance, ‘Visualising the Euro-gap’, URL <http://www.iid.int/elections/voter_turnout_europe/euro_gap_graphs.htm>.

¹³ As well as Denmark, Finland and Sweden, the EU15 includes Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Table 5.1. Public opinion in Denmark, Finland and Sweden about the EU, October–November 2003

Figures are per cent of respondents.

Support for European Union membership

‘Generally speaking, do you think your country’s membership in the European Union is . . . ?’

	Denmark	Finland	Sweden	EU15
A good thing	57	39	40	48
A bad thing	22	22	32	15
Neither good nor bad	19	37	27	31
Don’t know	2	2	2	6

Benefit from European Union membership

‘Taking everything into consideration, would you say your country has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the European Union?’

	Denmark	Finland	Sweden	EU15
Benefited	67	40	31	46
Not benefited	21	47	50	34
Don’t know	12	13	19	19

Support for a common foreign policy

‘What is your opinion on the following statement? Please tell me whether you are for it or against it. One common foreign policy among the member states of the European Union, towards other countries.’

	Denmark	Finland	Sweden	EU15
For	56	52	48	64
Against	36	36	41	22
Don’t know	9	13	11	14

Decisions on foreign policy

‘Do you think that decisions on foreign policy should be made by your national government, or made jointly within the European Union?’

	Denmark	Finland	Sweden	EU15
National government	34	30	39	20
Jointly within the EU	60	63	56	72
Don’t know	6	7	5	8

Support for a common defence policy

‘What is your opinion on the following statement? Please tell me whether you are for it or against it. One common defence and security policy among the member states of the European Union.’

	Denmark	Finland	Sweden	EU15
For	60	46	44	70
Against	32	43	45	19
Don’t know	8	11	11	12

Decisions on defence

'Do you think that decisions on defence should be made by the (national) government, or made jointly within the European Union?'

	Denmark	Finland	Sweden	EU15
National government	57	87	76	45
Jointly within the EU	40	10	21	50
Don't know	4	3	3	5

EU15 = The average across the European Union members prior to the May 2004 enlargement (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom).

Source: European Commission, European Opinion Research Group, *Eurobarometer 60: Public Opinion in the European Union* (European Opinion Research Group: Brussels, Feb. 2004), URL <http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/>, pp. 188, 190, 220, 230, 222, 228.

People's Party. Moreover, there is a significant, stable level of Euro-scepticism in Denmark, which has been clearly demonstrated in the Danish referendums on EU developments.¹⁴ In 1986, 44 per cent of Danish voters rejected the 1986 Single European Act.¹⁵ Parliamentary support was even weaker, with 56 per cent of the members of parliament voting against the act, including some members of the Social Democratic, Social-Liberal, Socialist People's and Left Socialist parties.¹⁶ The 1992 Treaty of Maastricht was rejected by 50.2 per cent of Danish voters,¹⁷ although in this case parliamentary opposition was much lower—only 15 per cent, with members of the Socialist People's and Progress parties casting the 'No' votes. The agreement at the Edinburgh European Council of 12 December 1992 that Denmark accept the Treaty of Maastricht with four opt-outs was rejected by 43 per cent of Danish voters (although only by the Progress Party in parliament).¹⁸ Finally, 45 per cent of voters and 20 per cent of parliamentarians (from the Socialist People's, Progress and Danish People's parties and the Red-Green Alliance) opposed the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam in 1998.¹⁹

Why do Danes seem so favourable towards the EU in public opinion polls? A possible explanation for their rather high overall support for the EU despite significant scepticism is a combination of the economic benefits of member-

¹⁴ Damgaard, E. and Nørgaard, A. S., 'The European Union and Danish parliamentary democracy', eds Bergman and Damgaard (note 10), p. 39.

¹⁵ The Single European Act was signed in Feb. 1986 and came into effect on 1 July 1987. The text of the act is available at URL <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/en/treaties/treaties_other.htm>.

¹⁶ The Left Socialist Party is now part of the Red-Green Alliance.

¹⁷ The Treaty on European Union (Treaty of Maastricht) was signed on 29 July 1992 and entered into force on 1 Nov. 1993. The text of the treaty is available at URL <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/EU_treaty.html>.

¹⁸ The 4 opt-outs were from the Economic and Monetary Union, European defence cooperation outside NATO, EU citizenship and EU cooperation on justice and home affairs.

¹⁹ The Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties Establishing the European Communities and Certain Related Acts was signed on 2 Oct. 1997 and entered into force on 1 May 1999. The text of the treaty is available at URL <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/en/treaties/treaties_other.htm>.

ship, which have been widely acknowledged for many years, and the fact that domestic political actors, in particular sceptics, have real opportunities to influence the behaviour of the Danish Government in Brussels. This is partially because of the power of the European Affairs Committee in the Danish Parliament, which has the formal right to give ministers a negotiating mandate that must be respected. However, it is also because under the Danish constitution all decisions that involve delegating power to supranational organizations require a referendum if the transfer is supported by less than a five-sixths majority in parliament.²⁰ The strength of these domestic controls is such that Finn Laursen goes so far as to say that ‘Danish EU policy is driven by domestic politics’.²¹ Erik Damgaard argues that the importance of parliament and voters in Danish EU politics is the result of a combination of widespread Euro-scepticism and weak minority governments.²² Thus, overall support can be maintained because on sensitive issues the Danish Government is forced to take domestic opinion seriously and act accordingly—which *inter alia* explains the four Danish opt-outs. Danish voters—EU favourable and EU sceptical alike—know that they have the right to give their final ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to a new EU constitution and that they will decide the future status of the opt-outs. It should be noted that, although Denmark’s early post-World War II preferences favoured inter-governmental cooperation, such as that under the European Free Trade Agreement, its geo-strategic position and economic interests have acted to push it towards acceptance of—if not necessarily enthusiasm for—regional cooperation within the EC/EU framework.

Finland and Sweden joined the EU at a time of economic difficulty, and their economic problems did not end with membership. Even if membership was not responsible for this, the arguments of the ‘Yes’ sides in the 1994 referendums on EU membership about the economic benefits of membership understandably lost credibility. In Sweden support for membership began to fall soon after the 1994 referendum. In June 1995 only 20 per cent of Swedes still thought that membership was a good idea; 48 per cent were opposed.²³ Finnish public support for the EU did not erode so quickly but, as the Eurobarometer data show, it is lower than it was in the referendum. Compared to Denmark, in Finland and Sweden EU sceptics have less opportunity to influence government policy. The European Affairs committees in the Finnish and Swedish parliaments are not as powerful as the Danish committee: in particular, they cannot give ministers binding negotiating instructions.²⁴ In addition, Finland and Sweden have no

²⁰ *The Constitutional Act of Denmark of June 5, 1953; the Act of Succession of March 27, 1953* (Folkeeting: Copenhagen, 1999), URL <<http://www.folketinget.dk/pdf/constitution.pdf>>, Section 20.

²¹ Laursen, F., ‘Denmark and the Intergovernmental Conference: a two-level game’, eds P. Carlsen and H. Mouritzen, *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2004* (Danish Institute for International Studies: Copenhagen, 2004), URL <<http://diis.dk/sw3668.asp>>, p. 92.

²² Damgaard, E., ‘Conclusion: the impact of European integration on Nordic parliamentary democracies’, eds Bergman and Damgaard (note 10), p. 158.

²³ Pesonen, P., Gilljam, M. and Jenssen, A. T., ‘Postscript: developments after the EU referendums’, eds Jenssen, Pesonen and Gilljam (note 6), p. 326.

²⁴ Damgaard (note 22), p. 158.

constitutional obligation to hold referendums on transferring power to supra-national organizations. Thus, it is unlikely that there will be referendums in these countries on a new EU constitution, even if some parties—for example, the Left and the Green parties in Sweden—call for one. The absence of EU-sceptical parties in the Finnish Parliament means that even when the parliament is involved in policy making it is unlikely to reflect the Euro-scepticism and anti-EU sentiment that exist among the membership of most parties and in the Finnish population.

IV. Implications for Nordic participation in security and defence cooperation

Given the Nordic countries' long history of support for and participation in UN missions, it is not surprising that there is support in these countries for the EU's development of a capacity to carry out the Petersberg Tasks and, more generally, rapid response capabilities in order to perform UN-sanctioned missions.²⁵ The development of binding EU collective defence obligations is clearly more problematic. This is obviously true for Sweden, where neutrality—or at least non-membership of military alliances—has long been part of its national identity. Sweden's engagement in helping to guide EU defence cooperation towards peacekeeping and humanitarian aid efforts is in keeping with Swedish foreign policy traditions and thus has support among the Swedish public. In addition, Sweden may contribute to slowing down EU moves towards collective defence obligations that would push the EU closer to becoming a military alliance of the sort that Sweden eschews. Nonetheless, the question of security guarantees and common defence will have to be faced eventually and, presumably, it will be more problematic for Sweden than for the other Nordic countries. Even in Finland, where neutrality has a shorter history and may not be part of the national identity in the same way as it is in Sweden, the widespread support for neutrality as a policy solution will pose a similar challenge.

Although Denmark has a history of collective security as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, there has been considerable Danish opposition to the EU's developing a common defence—hence the defence opt-out. Even among some who oppose a continuation of the opt-out, notably the Social-Liberal Party, there is opposition to Denmark maintaining a territorial defence and to EU defence cooperation if it involves increased military spending. More generally, the Social-Liberal Party opposes what it perceives as the militarization of the EU, including an EU that aspires to be a military superpower.²⁶

²⁵ The Petersberg Tasks were agreed in 1992 to strengthen the operational role of the Western European Union. They were later incorporated in the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam. They include humanitarian intervention and evacuation operations, peacekeeping and crisis management, including peace-making. See chapter 6 in this volume.

²⁶ Danish Social-Liberal Party, 'Program til Europa Parlamentsvalg 2004' [Programme for European Parliament elections 2004], 27 Mar. 2004, URL <<http://www.radikale.dk/article.aspx?id=3409>>.

Finally, what might all this mean for the future? Will party politics and citizens' opinions be important influences on Nordic government action as regards the future development of EU security and defence cooperation, or will elites do what they like regardless of domestic politics? It is easier to answer this with regard to the EU's capabilities to carry out humanitarian and crisis intervention and management tasks. As noted above, in the Nordic countries there is no elite-citizen split on this aspect of security and defence cooperation. Such developments are in line with long-established Nordic foreign policy traditions and are widely supported by elites, parties and citizens. The more complex question relates to support for the development of binding collective defence obligations. On the surface, this is less problematic for Denmark (and Norway, if it should join the EU) because of a 50-year history of collective security as a member of NATO. On the other hand, Denmark does not prefer the EU over NATO in this regard (as Miles notes, it is Atlanticist), and there is no support in Denmark for the increased military spending that would presumably be necessary if the EU were to assume some of NATO's collective security responsibilities. The most obvious indication of Danish opposition to too far-reaching a defence role for the EU is the Danish defence opt-out. It is widely accepted in Denmark that it is not possible to revoke this and the other opt-outs without a new referendum. Thus, there is reason to believe that domestic political conditions will have an important impact on Danish policy vis-à-vis security and defence policy cooperation.

Perhaps paradoxically, given its history of neutrality, it is possible that the Finnish Government will be able to act more autonomously in security and defence matters, while paying relatively little attention to domestic scepticism or even outright opposition. There is widespread and strong elite support for full participation in all aspects of EU cooperation and a lack of organized and powerful EU scepticism in the Finnish Parliament. In short, Finnish scepticism, although real, has few channels of influence. The Swedish Government, on the other hand, is more likely to be constrained by party and public opposition to security and defence developments that require EU members to give binding collective defence guarantees to each other. Neutrality is deeply rooted in the Swedish identity—even if the formal definition of Swedish neutrality has been watered down to refer to freedom from alliances and the possibility of remaining neutral in a violent conflict. The question can be asked whether 'freedom from alliances' reflects reality given Sweden's cooperation with NATO and its membership of the EU. Nonetheless, non-membership of any military alliance has powerful symbolic value. Any security and defence cooperation that is perceived as undermining it is likely to be strongly opposed by large numbers of citizens as well as by the Centre Party, the anti-EU parties and significant parts of the Social Democratic Party. In other words, opposition will be broad, extending from the left of the political spectrum well into the centre and will probably even include a sizeable number of Christian Democrat voters. In this situation it seems likely that Sweden's ultimate fallback position on security

and defence cooperation would be to support some sort of 'variable geometry', to use an old term. Such a position would ensure that Sweden could opt out of security cooperation but not stand in the way of others who want to act. The trouble is that this, the most comfortable solution in domestic political terms, would mean a break with Sweden's efforts since 1999 to avoid 'singularization', to claim a place in the EU's security 'hard core' and, in general, to avoid creating 'insider' and 'outsider' groups in security and defence cooperation.

In short, the domestic factors discussed here suggest that, as regards security and defence cooperation, the pattern that the Nordic countries display vis-à-vis adoption of the euro might be a guide to their engagement in the ESDP. Finland participates fully and, at least as regards binding collective defence obligations in the foreseeable future, Sweden is on the sidelines. Denmark must formally remain on the outside until Danish voters have reversed their decision on the defence opt-out. Sweden can be expected to continue to be an active supporter of the Petersberg Tasks and a proponent of the further development of crisis intervention and management capabilities.

