



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
INDUSTRY AND TRADE**  
Faroe Islands

**Proposal for a Parliamentary Resolution  
on  
National Security Policy**

Recognising that to advance cooperation on peace, democracy, human rights and global stability, and to ensure the safety and democracy of the Faroese people, defend their territorial integrity on land as well as at sea, and to protect the welfare, infrastructure and social institutions crucial to them, the Parliament of the Faroe Islands, the *Løgting*, agrees on the following main objectives for the government to pursue:

- 1) The Faroe Islands aim to promote peace, democracy, human rights and stability.
- 2) All international security and defence efforts supported and promoted by the Faroe Islands or in which they participate shall comply with international law and build on international agreements and cooperation.
- 3) The Faroe Islands shall take responsibility for their own security and defence policy. All plans and decisions regarding activity in Faroese sea, land or air territory are to be administered by Faroese authorities, which are democratically accountable to the *Løgting* and the Faroese people.
- 4) Actions will be taken to strengthen civilian security and emergency services to prevent cyber-attacks, promote cyber-security and protect critical national infrastructure.
- 5) To this end, Faroese authorities will establish regular communication with Danish and neighbouring state authorities as well as with NATO, to identify relevant options for cooperation around security and defence, including possibilities for the Faroe Islands to participate in security and defence management of the North Atlantic.
- 6) The aim is to become part of all security and defence policy processes and decisions, which in bilateral and multilateral relations are relevant to the Faroe Islands and to the region of which they are part.

- 7) Cooperation on security issues and Faroese participation in defence and military cooperation shall be carried out on a civilian basis and shall serve Faroese security interests as well as the security interests of the West Nordic and other Nordic countries, other neighbouring states and NATO allies.
- 8) The Faroe Islands and its territorial sea is a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and the Faroe Islands endorse disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass-destruction, including nuclear weapons, in accordance with international law.
- 9) Air and sea surveillance and the exercise of Faroese sovereignty are executed in cooperation between Faroese authorities and relevant partners.
- 10) For Faroese society to withstand complex threats, national contingency measures shall be designed to ensure public safety, cyber-security, supply chains, food security, public health, the environment, nature, property and assets.

## **1. Explanatory comments to the Proposal**

### **Purpose**

The government's objective with this proposal is to obtain parliamentary support for the position of the Faroe Islands in matters of security and defence policy.

As a nation and party to international conventions in a number of areas, the Faroe Islands are part of the global community with own interests, rights and obligations. Given the nature of prevailing world politics, if the government does not identify Faroese interests and work to secure them, the danger is that someone else will, also when it comes to security and defence policy.

The national and international interests of the Faroe Islands determine the direction of the government's foreign and security policy. Fundamental to this is the safety of the Faroese people and the protection of the welfare and social institutions crucial for Faroese democracy. Moreover, the Faroes must accept direct responsibility on the global stage and as part of global society to ensure peace, democracy, human rights and stability through international law and agreements.

The main objective of a Faroese national security policy is to ensure peace and security and for Faroese authorities to take on an active role in achieving this objective. The fulfilment of this role requires coordinated cooperation with neighbouring states, with NATO, and with all relevant authorities in charge of security and defence in the region.

All decisions regarding security issues shall be taken in accordance with the Faroese law of governance. This means that all decisions requiring parliamentary consent, such as legislation, amendments and appropriation and other decisions of importance, are to be presented to the Løgting. In matters of significant international importance, the government shall confer with the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs. Whether or not a matter warrants parliamentary review, despite not requiring parliamentary consent, is subject to individual consideration.

### **A turning point for world politics and security**

Notwithstanding the Cold War arms race, as well as threats and shadow wars around the world, and despite fears of nuclear warfare in a polarised world with a stark divide between the great powers across the North Atlantic, the Faroes have long enjoyed a privileged position in the North Atlantic, where peace and security have prevailed since World War II.

Now global political tides are turning. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has had a good 30 years of hegemonic power, setting the agenda for global politics as well as for security and defence.

The general belief was that globalisation, democratisation, economic integration, extensive trust-inspiring cooperation, trade and openness would effectively promote an ever more stable and safer world order.

The idea of international law and cooperation as the basis for global peace and security was fractured, for one, when UN resolutions were sidestepped to pave the way for the invasion of Iraq in the early 2000s. The Løgting opposed the invasion at the time.

Although a certain strategic stability prevailed in large parts of the world, dispute and conflict were also prevalent in world politics in the years following the Cold War. In the North Atlantic, however, civil war, armed conflict, insurgencies and terror attacks were relatively foreign to everyday life.

The unanimously adopted UN Sustainable Development Goals sparked a hope in 2015, as many viewed the agreement as a potential basis for strengthening the vision and aim for united nations, international cooperation, human rights and a fairer and more peaceful world for all.

However, the current unrest and its consequences seem to have brought an end to the era of globalisation. Instead, protectionism is on the rise in a multi-axial system, where diverse alliances and strategies are disrupting the usual perceptions of the existing world order and balance of power. New signs of competition between states and great powers are likely to shape the coming years. Long-term strategies will be necessary for states to compete for essentials such as raw materials, resources and technology for their own security and defence.

Russia is proving to be a military threat in Europe. In a broader context, China is presenting a long-term strategic challenge for the West. And many countries in the Global South, home to the majority of the world's population, are forming their own alliances rather than choosing sides in a bi- or tripolar world order.

At the same time, the world is now more intertwined economically, technologically and culturally than ever before. As such, there is a lot at stake, as the balance of power is shifting towards multipolarity.

The war in Ukraine has only sped up the process. Many have identified the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 as a turning point and beginning of a new era, with the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 cementing the formation of a new world order.

Increased uncertainty and conflict are evidence of a changing balance of power. In addition to the war in Ukraine, recent months have been marked by the conflict in Gaza between Israel and Hamas, as well as the activities of the Houthi movement, staging uprisings in parts of Yemen and disrupting international shipping in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea.

In recent years, the scope of security policy has expanded significantly, extending into international politics and encompassing areas such as trade, telecommunications, technology, energy, research, access to certain resources, transportation and supply chains. Technological advancements, including artificial intelligence, have increasing influence on global power dynamics. As the domain of security policy widens, Faroese authorities face growing demands to also consider security aspects, when legislating in areas over which the Løgting has full powers.

In this context, the concept of strategic self-sufficiency is pivotal. It refers to the ability to be self-reliant and minimally dependent on others, especially in the face of shifting circumstances and changes. This involves prioritising domestic knowledge and production, both as a nation and as an ally within a broader security policy context.

European countries are taking deliberate steps towards becoming more strategically self-sufficient, individually as well as in collaboration with their allies. Protective measures are being implemented to safeguard key industries, knowledge and infrastructure, with a strong emphasis on developing domestic technologies, securing supply chains and optimising transportation and production.

Overall, the Faroe Islands have benefited greatly from decades of globalisation, regional security and global free trade. A more fragmented world order may pose a challenge for trade opportunities and cooperation in certain areas, which in turn may also have implications for foreign and security policy in the Faroe Islands. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a clear direction for Faroese foreign, security and defence policy.

In Europe and in NATO, solidarity is essential for security. In a changing world, the Faroese government places particular emphasis on cooperation with like-minded nations embracing peace, democracy, human rights and stability. At the same time, international cooperation cannot be reduced to a matter of "either-or," based on a black-and-white worldview. Like most countries, the Faroe Islands will continue on the basis of openness and transparency, to prioritise cooperation on issues and matters serving Faroese interests and objectives promoted by the Faroe Islands in the international arena.

### **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**

That the government puts forward this proposal on a national security policy for the Faroe Islands is an acknowledgment of the fact that international security, safety and peace cannot be taken for granted. They are indeed prerequisites for the free and democratic basis of existence, development and welfare enjoyed across large parts of the globe. In order to preserve and strengthen this position, most countries in the Euro-Atlantic area collaborate on defence and security matters and, by extension, share fundamental security interests.

The most extensive cooperation in this regard is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO was established in 1949 and currently includes 32 member states. The crux of the security alliance is Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, stipulating that an attack on one member state is an attack on all member states. As a result, the organisation reserves the right to respond to attacks on member states collectively.

The Faroe Islands are located in the middle of the area covered by the Washington Treaty, which NATO has pledged to defend. Therefore, the Faroe Islands also share fundamental security and defence interests with NATO's member states.

Denmark's ratification of the Washington Treaty in 1949 did not include a territorial reservation regarding the Faroe Islands. Hence, the Faroe Islands are also part of NATO, although Faroese authorities were not consulted on the accession of the Kingdom of Denmark, despite Article 7 of the Faroe Islands' Home Rule Act requiring such prior consultation.

For many years, the Nordic region was relatively quiet in a NATO context. Stability and cooperation have defined the region. In recent years, however, interest in security and defence in the North has been increasing. The High North is increasingly prominent in NATO considerations, as mentioned, for example, in the 2030 Strategic Concept and in declarations from NATO summits.

In addition to the global changes taking place, Russia's growing investments in and expansion of its defence capabilities along its northern coastline is another reason for NATO's increased focus on security and defence in the Nordic region and the Arctic. Furthermore, the melting sea ice resulting from climate change is paving the way for new shipping routes that could have strategic implications. And, since the onset of the war in Ukraine, Russia's Northern Fleet has become increasingly significant strategically for Russia. Natural resources in the High North and along the northern routes

are also attracting interest from countries and great powers around the world, which may have implications for security and defence.

The Faroe Islands are strategically well-positioned relative to a potential northern sea route. They are also located in the middle of the so-called GIFUK gap (Greenland-Iceland-Faroe Islands-United Kingdom), i.e. the North Atlantic's line of defence facing threats from the north. Consequently, due to their geographical position, Faroese territory, airspace, seabed infrastructure and maritime domain are necessarily key elements in the security and defence policy of neighbouring states.

The main component of NATO's defence strategy is deterrence. The goal is to have enough capabilities with which to respond and withstand, that adversaries refrain from attack. Foreign and security policy is as much about assuming responsibility as it is about asserting rights and benefits.

Therefore, it is crucial that the Faroe Islands participate and contribute to shaping developments, as NATO and its member states place increasing focus and attention on the High North. The Faroe Islands should, to the extent possible, support initiatives that contribute to a credible deterrence strategy, particularly in relation to enhanced monitoring at sea, in the air and under water.

Increased patrolling is accompanied by a greater and more visible military presence, which also contributes to ensuring credible deterrence. Recent years have seen an increase in foreign warships docking in the Faroe Islands, foreign aircrafts have conducted landing and take-off exercises, and NATO has carried out naval exercises in Faroese maritime territory. The government is also working on installing a new air surveillance radar on Mount Sornfelli in cooperation with the Danish government.

Participation is a priority in relevant activities, such as naval exercises, with relevant Faroese authorities and stakeholders, such as the Faroese Coast Guard.

The Faroe Islands will remain a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and diplomatic clearance for foreign vessels visiting is contingent upon vessels not carrying chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons. This condition also applies to nuclear-powered vessels entering Faroese territorial sea and internal waters. For safety reasons, nuclear-powered vessels must also meet specific demands, aimed at reducing the risk of radiation contamination.

The government places great emphasis on communication with those NATO member states who have naval vessels and other naval forces present in the North Atlantic, particularly the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway, Denmark, Canada, Germany and France.

To preserve peace and stability while concurrently increasing defence-related activities, it is essential to strike a balance, where unintended sources of tension are accounted for and the likelihood of misunderstandings reduced. Thus, transparency and foresight are crucial when prioritising activities in the North Atlantic. There should be a solid basis for new activities to prevent security dilemmas from arising, i.e. when actions taken by one party to increase own security provoke counteractions by other parties, which often result in diminished overall security.

### **Nordic Defence Cooperation**

With Finland now a NATO member and Sweden set to join, all Nordic countries will be members of NATO. This offers new opportunities for collaboration on security and defence issues, which is also relevant for the Faroe Islands, both within NATO and in a Nordic context. For many years, the Faroe

Islands have sought to gain a more active role with respect to Nordic cooperation and to participate in all relevant areas. In this regard, the government has also initiated efforts to identify relevant options for collaboration in the Nordic defence cooperation, NORDEFECO.

To ensure a solid knowledge base regarding foreign, security and defence policy, the Faroe Islands will cooperate with Greenland, Iceland and other Nordic neighbours in areas of research and education focused on peace-building security policy.

## **JEF**

The United Kingdom leads the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) initiative, which also includes Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and the Netherlands. As the purpose of JEF is to coordinate efforts that enhance security in the North Atlantic and the Baltic Sea, the Faroese government will explore possibilities for the Faroe Islands to participate in relevant JEF activities, particularly with a focus on emergency preparedness and rescue operations.

## **Emergency preparedness**

The national emergency preparedness of the Faroe Islands must be able to withstand threats to public security, cybersecurity, supply and food security, public health, the environment, nature, property and assets. Regular risk assessments should form the basis of the emergency preparedness efforts.

Emergency preparedness efforts must also take into account hybrid threats, which could affect societal stability and cohesion, such as the use of disinformation to assert influence, soft power manipulation, economic coercion, cyberattacks and covert activities.

Faroese authorities responsible for civil security and preparedness will be strengthened and cooperate with relevant foreign counterparts to ensure a security and defence policy that promotes security, resilience and preparedness.

There is a strong focus on increasing Faroese participation in international cooperation on emergency preparedness, particularly within the Nordic framework. Currently, concrete efforts are underway to integrate the Faroe Islands into the Nordic cooperation on civil protection and emergency preparedness, the HAGA, and the prospects of achieving this goal within a reasonable time frame are good. Within NATO, preparedness and societal resilience are also increasingly viewed as strategic defence tools. In this context, Faroese authorities should engage in meaningful collaborations that can enhance resilience and preparedness in the Faroe Islands.

## **Cybersecurity**

Digital systems, many of which in modern society qualify as fundamental infrastructure, are under constant threat of cyberattacks. Reports of individuals, businesses and systems being incapacitated are frequent. Consequences may be severe if systems fail, or if data suddenly become inaccessible or fall into the wrong hands. Cyberattacks may harm Faroese society and have serious repercussions for essential services, including healthcare, power supply and communication services.

Efforts to promote cybersecurity are therefore of crucial importance for a well-functioning welfare state. According to the Faroe Islands' Cybersecurity Plan 2024-2026, systematic initiatives will aim at enhancing cybersecurity, preventing cyberattacks and establishing an effective preparedness that strengthens resilience and limits consequences of any attacks that do occur.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Industry and Trade has the overarching responsibility for executing the Cybersecurity Plan in cooperation with the Telecommunication Authority and other relevant authorities. Cyberattacks that could cripple society have enormous consequences. Therefore, it is essential for the government, municipalities and private industry to prioritise and make necessary investments to implement the actions outlined in the plan. The plan includes eight strategic goals to be achieved through 20 specific actions. Current efforts are aimed at reaching the first goal, which is to map out critical societal infrastructure. This is largely a prerequisite for the implementation of further actions. A proposal on cybersecurity will be presented to the Løgting in the upcoming parliamentary session.

### **Confidentiality**

Managing and handling security and defence issues requires an administration capable of managing classified information. Therefore, a government circular has been issued regarding the classification and protection of information that is of mutual interest to NATO member states and as such requires safeguarding. These rules align with those of NATO, enabling Faroese authorities to share and receive relevant information accordingly.

### **Previous Resolutions**

To put the proposal at hand in a broader context, and to illustrate the historical progression of the Løgting's stance on security and defence policy, a review of prior parliamentary resolutions concerning security, military and defence matters is relevant.

When Britain occupied the Faroe Islands, the Løgting objected with a letter to the British consul in the Faroe Islands. Dated 13 April 1940, the letter stated the following:

*The Faroe Islands' Parliament, Føroya Løgting, received notification yesterday that England intends to deploy soldiers on our land to defend it. This is unsolicited from the Faroese people. The Løgting's position is to keep the Faroe Islands outside of current conflicts and disputes between countries.*

*The Løgting reserves its rights and objects to any state, even if friendly, deploying soldiers on our land, although pressing circumstances prevent further action.*

*The Løgting, which for centuries and under varying conditions has represented the Faroe Islands according to its written and unwritten laws, expects and desires that nothing affecting the Faroe Islands will change without prior consultation with the Løgting.*

In 1959, the Løgting considered the matter of building a radar station on Mount Sornfelli. Following committee review, the Løgting resolved on 25 April 1959, that:

*Evidently, the matter is settled and will be noted as such.*

*The Løgting underscores its opposition to all conventional military expansion in the Faroe Islands, should such a matter arise.*

When informed that soldiers would be stationed in the Faroes, the Løgting adopted the following resolution on 12 May 1961:

*The Faroe Islands' Løgting objects to the deployment of soldiers on Mount Sornfelli and at the Eiðistation and denies the storage and use of military equipment on Faroese land and maritime territory.*

On 19 August 1970, the Løgting adopted the following:

*The Faroe Islands' Løgting requests that the government inform the State Authority of the Løgting's resolution of 13 April 1940, stating the position of the Løgting that the Faroe Islands are to remain outside disputes between countries and any military alliances, and that the Løgting, in accordance with resolution No. 14/1969, objects to the deployment of soldiers on Mount Sornfelli and at the Eiðistation and denies the storage of military equipment on Faroese land and maritime territory. The government is simultaneously requested to solicit an inquiry from the State Authority into the prospects of implementation of the aforementioned resolutions.*

*The results of this inquiry shall be presented to the Løgting during the winter session of 1970/71.*

It can be added that the Løgting did not seriously address the matter again until 1983, when the issue to a greater extent revolved around nuclear weapons.

This led to the resolution of 24 February 1984, stating:

*In accordance with the parliamentary resolution of 19 August 1970, that the Faroe Islands are to remain outside disputes between countries and that the storage of military equipment on Faroese territory is prohibited, the Løgting declares the Faroe Islands a nuclear-weapon-free zone.*

On 18 May 2004, the Løgting adopted a proposal for parliamentary resolution on security policy, stating that:

*The Løgting supports the government in taking necessary steps to safeguard the Faroe Islands' security interests, including defence interests, in accordance with the following principles:*

- 1. The government ensures full insight into all security policy matters concerning the Faroe Islands and full participation of Faroese authorities in all decision-making processes relating to such matters.*
- 2. The government's consideration of security matters must give the utmost regard to the safety of the country and the well-being of its people, and the government shall confer with the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs on all significant matters in this regard.*
- 3. To this end, the government shall confer with relevant authorities to ensure a responsible handling of matters concerning the security of the Faroe Islands.*
- 4. For Faroese authorities to adequately represent the national interests of the Faroese people in security matters, they must be appropriately organised with respect to the handling of classified information.*

The 2004 proposal for parliamentary resolution marks a departure from previous resolutions and implies a significant shift in the Løgting's stance on security and defence matters. Previously, the matter was characterised by detachment, not least because decisions were often made without Faroese participation in the process. Conversely, in 2004, the Løgting consented to authorising the government to assume a more active role in security and defence matters.

### **National Security Policy 2024**

The proposal for a parliamentary resolution now presented to the Løgting aims to ensure the democratic rule of the people of the Faroe Islands in matters and decisions relating to security and defence. The goal is to align security and defence activities with civilian protection and emergency preparedness to safeguard people, democracy, nature, industry, the environment and resources.

Although the formal framework surrounding Faroese security matters remains unaltered since the Home Rule Act of 1948, the conditions for Faroese authorities to take on an active role and responsibility for the nation's security and defence have changed. Circumstances are different from those of the Second World War, the Cold War and 2004. They are different domestically, in relations between the Faroe Islands and Denmark and globally.

The government's objectives, as stated in this proposal, are to be pursued with accountability to the Løgting and with due consideration for the security of the Faroe Islands. Being a product of its time, this resolution, like those before it, requires regular assessment to ensure necessary updates or renewal in order for the national security policy of the Faroe Islands to serve its purpose effectively.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Industry and Trade, 7 March 2024

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/ Herálvur Joensen