

Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission
Brussels, Belgium

Invitation to visit northernmost Europe's offer to EU's Green Deal

Dear Ms. Ursula von der Leyen,

In northern Sweden and all of the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA) of northern Sweden, Finland and Norway, we truly appreciate Your efforts to, together with Executive Vice President Frans Timmermans, make a pervasive green transition in the European Union. It is the most important issue, together with tackling the Covid-19 pandemic and the digitalization, that we strongly support concerning the current EU Commission's agenda. It goes for us very much hand in hand with being part of the European Arctic and the EU gateway to the Arctic.

We did note the State of the Union speech delivered on October 16, and the very strong emphasis on the European green deal. We especially, of course, noted the mentioning of the efforts to make steel without coal, the so called Hybrit project in my own region of northern Sweden, as a good example for Europe. We are proud to be in the global front and Hybrit is a guiding example for the use of clean hydrogen in the green transition.

We also noted the mentioning of the need to make buildings more sustainable and that the building sector can be turned from a carbon source to a carbon sink if organic building materials is used. Building in wood runs in our blood, having an active and sustainable forestry since decades. For example, can the highest building built in tree in Europe be found in our regions.

The list of front running projects taking lead in the green deal are long in our regions, such as processes for production of biofuels and bio-based products from forests that can replace oil and plastic. The bioeconomy is an overall potential for a European smart green deal and the active forestry delivers a negative carbon footprint, contributing to EU's ambitious goals.

To this comes the electrical revolution with use of hydropower and the largest wind farms in Europe and development of electric aviation systems, the most climate smart battery factory within the EU Battery Alliance and world's first by Greenpeace certified server data halls. Not to mention the big number of sustainably operated mines offering a broad range of minerals from which EU could become less dependent from abroad for technology needed for the green shift.

There are still challenges to overcome, but large potentials in a continued close collaboration with the EU and our own increasing strategic collaboration in the NSPA regions. We want to give our support for the high set ambitions by the European Commission and we would hereby like to invite You and Your Team to visit the unique northernmost regions of the EU to be inspired by what we can do. We are more than willing to make all necessary arrangements to make this possible, as it would be a privilege. We understand that the current situation imposes travel restrictions, but we can start to plan to offer a safe travel in our regions.

Yours sincerely,



Nils-Olov Lindfors

Chair of Northern Sparsely Populated Areas of northern Sweden, Finland and Norway

Counsellor for Regional Development, Region Norrbotten

Rapporteur, European Forum Northern Sweden for the four northernmost Swedish regions