



## Views from North Norway on the EU Military Mobility package initiative

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North Norway European Office was established 1 January 2005 and is owned by the three northernmost counties in Norway: Nordland, Troms and Finnmark. The office is located in Brussels and serves as a door opener and an arena maker for Northern Norwegian actors in relation to the European Union. The office holds an informational role, with particular focus on the European Arctic policy, regional policy, current industrial policies and Northern European cooperation.

The regions of North Norway welcome the European Commission's initiative to strengthen Europe's military mobility framework. Together with the northernmost regions of Sweden and Finland, Northern Norway forms part of the [Northern Sparsely Populated Areas \(NSPA\)](#), which play a vital role in Europe's security architecture. The NSPA region is a strategic gateway between the Arctic, the Baltic Sea and the wider European continent. In today's geopolitical climate, a resilient, dual-use transport infrastructure in the NSPA is both desirable and indispensable – ensuring operational readiness, allied reception, and civilian preparedness.

Northern Norway's strategic location makes the region central to NATO's northern defence posture. Decades of allied cooperation have developed extensive infrastructure for reception, storage and logistics, but current capacities and redundancies remain limited. The region is now evolving from primarily a host nation for



prepositioned forces to a key transit and logistics corridor connecting Finland, Sweden and Norway. This north–east–west axis is essential for European and transatlantic security, particularly under scenarios involving the Baltic Sea or High North.

The OECD's [\*Territorial Review of the NSPA \(2025\)\*](#) confirms that east–west connections across the northern regions remain underdeveloped. It highlights that fragmented infrastructure, long distances, sparse population and limited redundancy expose the area to high vulnerability. These findings are acutely relevant for Northern Norway. The region accounts for only a small share of national transport capacity, and much of its infrastructure depends on single corridors with no viable alternatives. A damaged bridge or ferry link can isolate entire areas and disrupt both civilian and military mobility for extended periods. Extreme weather, floods and landslides – intensified by climate change – further threaten connectivity and supply security.

At the same time, the NSPA regions, including North Norway, are key to Europe's green and digital transitions. Renewable energy, critical raw materials and strategic industrial capacity are concentrated here – yet the geography and climate make these assets fragile. Investment in resilient transport systems will therefore contribute simultaneously to European security, competitiveness and sustainability.

In this light, North Norway supports the European Commission's ambition to embed military mobility within a broader European framework for dual-use infrastructure. We ask the Commission to consider recognising the specific conditions of the European Arctic and the NSPA as a functional area requiring tailored solutions in the forthcoming regulation. Targeted investment in cross-border east–west and north–south corridors would significantly enhance connectivity, redundancy and interoperability between EU and NATO networks.





Strengthening coordination between national authorities, regional governments and defence actors is equally important. Regional authorities in North Norway are responsible for roughly 80% of the public road network and play a key role in civil transport preparedness and total defence. Embedding regional levels in planning and implementation will ensure that investments meet both local and European needs, as recommended by the OECD and the NSPA.

## Regional Input and Recommendations

To ensure the regulation effectively addresses the specific needs of the European Arctic and the NSPA, North Norway recommends that it:

- **Includes all levels of the TEN-T network**—Comprehensive and Extended—so that investments reach peripheral and Arctic regions.
- **Strengthens connectivity with neighbouring third countries**, notably Norway, to ensure coherence with NATO's expanded northern territory.
- **Establishes a dedicated CEF funding line** for cross-border and dual-use projects involving third countries such as Norway.
- **Prioritises key east–west and north–south transport corridors** in the European Arctic, in a coordinated manner, ensuring interoperability and redundancy between Nordic and EU networks. Examples of regionally important TEN-T corridors include:
  - E8 Kilpisjärvi (Finnish border) – Tromsø (port and Urban node)
  - E45 to Alta
  - E10 to Narvik
  - The Ofoten Line / Iron ore line

- **Promotes multimodal and climate-resilient infrastructure**, integrating rail, sea and air transport while combining environmental protection with strategic preparedness.
- **Advances civil–military coordination and Arctic preparedness** by reducing administrative barriers and fostering joint needs assessments, training and exercises between civilian and defence actors. This could include capacity-building in civil–military logistics, cross-border resource coordination, and the sharing of infrastructure and transport assets across the Nordic Arctic.
- **Addresses energy resilience and climate impacts in the Arctic**, recognising that secure energy supply and sustainable infrastructure are prerequisites for both civilian mobility and defence readiness.
- **Empowers regional authorities** as key actors in transport preparedness and total defence
- **Recognises cross-border initiatives such as [Platform North](#) and the Interreg project [New North](#)** as important instruments for aligning regional, national, and EU-level efforts on dual-use infrastructure and Arctic connectivity.
- **Improves interoperability and information sharing** through joint digital logistics and analysis systems between EU, NATO and Norway.

**In conclusion**, the challenges of the European Arctic—limited and vulnerable infrastructures, harsh climate, and long supply lines—demand specific solutions. Strengthening dual-use infrastructure and cross-border cooperation in Northern Norway and across the NSPA will enhance Europe’s total defence capability, reinforce NATO’s northern flank, and contribute to a secure, resilient and sustainable Europe

**Contact:** Nils Kristian Sørheim Nilsem, Director / Dr. Polit., North Norway European Office, [nils@northnorway.org](mailto:nils@northnorway.org)

