

Minutes from the first Nordic local policy roundtable on charging infrastructure at the Nordic EV Summit, 2019

The Nordics is a pioneering region in the field of electric mobility. The top-three market shares globally are found here, and the Nordic region has one of the highest ratios of plug-in electric vehicles per capita in the world (IEA, 2018). One contributing factor to the accelerated deployment of plug-in electric vehicles have been the active role of some Nordic cities and the municipalities.

On the 21st of March 2019, participants from Nordic public authorities joined in a roundtable discussion regarding deployment of charging infrastructure and the promotion of plug-in electric vehicles. The Nordic countries represented at the roundtable were Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Each country presented their policy framework, with focus on the conditions for local public authorities to contribute to the transition of the transport sector. These minutes will compile the discussions regarding the opportunities for local public authorities to complement national policy but also challenges.

The Nordics have a deregulated electricity market design, anyone can be a charging point operator. In all the Nordic countries there are national demand-side policies to promote the new-sales of plug-in electric vehicles. All Nordic countries also have national investment support schemes to deploy charging infrastructure, but the eligible actors vary between the countries. Historically, large focus has been on public charging and here has both public and private companies been involved. However, some actors have struggled with the business case and the electricity has been, and in some cases still are, expected to be offered for free. This has pointed out the need to direct investment support to actors with a sustainable business model to offer charging. Public housing and parking companies have the possibility to build a business case to deploy charging infrastructure, which is upgrading their core business - the parking space. Electricity is relatively cheap in the Nordics, hence no great returns to relate the service to the electricity price. However, the possibility with a fixed cost (per parking session/day/month) could several participants see as a viable way forward. To act through the local public housing and parking companies was also

noted as a strategy to promote plug-in electric vehicles among households in multi-family dwellings.

The parking policies varies in the Nordic countries, where in some there are the possibility to reserve certain parking spaces for example plug-in electric vehicles. Other countries are much restrictive with exceptions. Private parking lots always have the possibility to stipulate certain places for specific vehicles. In this initial phase, attractive parking spaces have been used to deploy charging infrastructure to promote the use of plug-in electric vehicles. There is notable irritation among car-drivers in the Nordics regarding reserved parking/charging spaces that are not occupied. In some Nordic areas, where there are a high share of plug-in electric vehicles, more and more parking lots has adopted a deployment strategy where many charging points are deployed at the far end of the parking lot, instead of a few close to the exit.

To complement the promotional activities, there could also be requirements that specify a certain level of charging infrastructure. There are such requirements for public parking lots in Norway already and the EU have enforced requirements for both public and non-public parking lots in the Energy Performance in Buildings directive. These requirements are enforced at parking lots, which means a certain duration at the site and therefore implies low

The discussion also mentioned questions regarding potential lack of transmission capacity. However, most of the representatives at the policy roundtable work in the field of transport and climate related issues and therefore have no electricity system expertise within their groups to consult. Concerns regarding transmission capacity comes foremost from politicians or the society. To coordinate knowledge-sharing within the authority but also with the public companies that physically deploy the charging infrastructure could be improved.

Conclusions

There are high expectations on Nordic local public authorities to promote plug-in electric vehicles and to deploy charging infrastructure. However, there are some uncertainties how this may be done most effectively. Public authorities working with climate, energy and transport related issues are sometimes used as inhouse experts, to consult in strategic decision made by other public companies. This internal knowledge-transfer is important to identify new opportunities to contribute to the local society. Public housing and parking companies have favorable conditions to enable charging points to tenants. Public energy companies contribute to the deployment of public charging. The Nordic local authorities have good conditions to promote the use of plug-in electric vehicles, however for many authorities it is still unclear exactly how.