



# NORDIC CYCLING

## MINUTES

### Nordic Cycling strategy meeting 2025 in Tallinn, Estonia

29.11.2025 at 11.00-15.15

Mercury hotel Tallinn

Members:	Raivo Rand (Estonia), Katariina Laakkonen (Finland), Bjarni Már Svarvarsson (Iceland), Darius Levickis (Lithuania), Morten Andersson (Denmark), Artis Ozols (Latvia), Bjørn Birkeland (Norway)
UCI-UEC representative:	Henrik Jess Jensen (UCI), Raivo Rand (UEC)
Invited guests:	Enrico Della Casa, UEC President, Kersti Kaljulaid, Estonian Olympic Committee
Participants:	Jorma Paakkari (Finland), Hjalti Hjartarson (Iceland), Arnfinnur Helmsdal (Faroe Island), Jaan Lepajõe (Estonia), Mihkel Nanits (Estonia), Michael Lajer (Denmark)
Executive Committee:	Henrik Jess Jensen (Denmark), Raivo Rand (Estonia), Katariina Laakkonen (Finland)
Coordinator:	Estonia

Meeting was chaired by Raivo Rand (Estonia) and minutes were taken by Evelin Idarand (Estonia).

#### 1. Opening of the Meeting by the Chair of the Board Mr. Raivo Rand

The Chair of the Board opened the meeting by welcoming all participants and emphasising the value of having representatives from nearly all Nordic Cycling commissions present in Tallinn. He highlighted that Nordic Cycling has matured significantly in recent years and expressed hope that similar in-person strategic meetings could take place every 2-3 years.

#### 2. Welcome from Estonian Olympic Committee president Mrs. Kersti Kaljulaid

Mrs. Kaljulaid welcomed the participants on behalf of the Estonian Olympic Committee, expressing strong support for Nordic-level collaboration. She highlighted the importance of regional cooperation for strengthening European sport and praised the Nordic Cycling structure as a meaningful example of international cooperation.



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## 3. Overview of the current strategy

A general overview was presented by Estonia (acting coordinator), focusing on three pillars: Nordic Championships, commissaire courses and internal structure.

### Nordic Championships – Strengths and Structural Gaps

Nordic Championships remain a central activity of Nordic Cycling, especially in disciplines with stable traditions such as BMX, Gravel and XCO, which have been organised consecutively over the past years.

However, significant gaps exist in other disciplines:

- Road, Track, Downhill, Marathon have not held regular Nordic Championships, with multiple missing years.
- Participation levels vary greatly; in some events, only the host nation fields substantial numbers.
- Organisers face increasing costs, volunteer shortages, and difficulties attracting athletes across long travel distances.
- Late confirmation of hosts and dates complicates national calendar planning.

The discussion emphasised the need for a clearer long-term championship structure, potentially shifting some disciplines toward a Nordic Cup model rather than traditional championships.

### Commissaire Development – One of Nordic Cycling's Strongest Areas

Commissaire collaboration was identified as a major strategic strength:

- The Road Commissaire Exchange is functioning very well and is highly valued.
- In 2025, Nordic Cycling organised its first practical commissaire courses in BMX and Cyclo-cross, receiving excellent feedback from participants.
- There is strong interest in expanding practical training to additional disciplines in the future.
- UEC President confirmed that Nordic nations can receive support for commissaire participation at UEC events, strengthening competence in smaller federations.

Continued use of UEC Solidarity Funding for commissaire programmes was encouraged, with commissions asked to prepare project proposals for 2027.

### Internal Structure, Communication and Coordination



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The current strategy also highlighted internal organisational challenges:

- Activity levels in commissions differ significantly; some countries' members meet regularly while other countries are passive.
- Information flow between Nordic Cycling → federations → clubs is sometimes inconsistent.
- Deadlines for hosting Nordic Championships have been unclear, leading to late decisions and planning difficulties.

To address these issues, participants stressed the need for:

- National federations need to check their commission members and switch them if necessary,
- fixed annual deadlines (e.g., for championship applications).
- and more structured, long-term planning.

## **Nordic Cycling's International Position – A Significant Strength**

Despite some structural challenges, Nordic Cycling has a strong position in the European cycling landscape:

- Nordic countries are well represented in UEC and UCI commissions, working groups and the UEC and UCI Management Board.
- This gives Nordic Cycling a strong collective voice and better access to information and funding opportunities.
- The collaboration model is increasingly recognised at European level as an example of effective regional cooperation.

Nordic Cycling's current strategy demonstrates strong achievements in commissaire development and certain championships, but also highlights the need for improved structure, participation and planning. At the same time, Nordic Cycling's strong representation in UEC and UCI bodies provides a solid foundation for future strategic development.

## **4. Overview of commissions ideas**

### **Road commission**

- Nordic Road Cup instead of Nordic Championships

The commission discussed replacing Nordic Road Championships with a Nordic Road Cup, built on existing national races.



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- Each country selects one suitable race that already exists.
- These races would form a regional Cup with categories for Youth, Juniors and Women
- A Cup format would increase participation, allow riders to join several events, reduce the burden on organisers.

All commission members will send suggestions for suitable races by 15 January 2026, with the aim to assemble a Nordic calendar for youth, juniors, and women for 2026. Better cooperation is essential to achieve the goal of stronger participation in international-level road events.

- Creating a regional Criterium Championship

A new idea was proposed to introduce a Nordic Criterium Championship:

- Could be added to a large event that already includes a criterium.
  - Not intended for all classes initially; could start with youth or open categories.
  - Seen as an easier, more accessible racing format compared to a traditional road race.
- Review of commission participation

The commission noted that participation within the Road Commission itself is not good. Some member nations rarely attend meetings or provide input.

It was suggested that commission membership should be reviewed and adjusted if necessary, ensuring active representation from all Nordic countries.

## Mountain Bike commission

- XCO calendar issues due to late UCI announcements → complicates planning for organisers.
- XCO Championships work well and should continue.
- Discussion on creating a Nordic XCO Cup by linking 6 existing races (DK–NO–SE), potentially launched in 2027-2028.
- Concerns about too many categories and sponsor conflicts with leader jerseys.

## BMX commission

- Strong will to re-establish the traditional Nordic BMX Championships, disrupted in recent years due to distance and Covid.
- 2026 Nordic BMX Championships confirmed in Engelholm (Sweden).
- Agreed:



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make Nordic Champion jerseys,  
provide medals for all age categories,  
explore cooperation with a manufacturer (e.g. Moomoo) for unified winner jerseys.

## Track commission

- Nordic track collaboration currently weak due to limited velodromes and small participation.
- Proposed:
  - joint Nordic training camps for young riders and coaches,
  - shared knowledge from stronger track nations (Denmark, Lithuania),
  - multi-country development projects suitable for UEC funding.

## Commissaires commission

- Road commissaire exchange remains a key strength of Nordic Cycling.
- Agreement to continue practical courses and seek shared funding.
- Emphasised need to harmonise rules to avoid excluding young riders due to equipment restrictions (e.g., gear restrictions).

## 5. Welcome and overview of UEC Mr. Enrico Della Casa

UEC President Enrico Della Casa joined the meeting online and delivered an extensive overview of current European cycling developments, UEC priorities, and Nordic countries' role within the continental structure. His intervention highlighted both recognition of the Nordic region's influence and several opportunities for deeper cooperation.

Key points:

- Nordic nations are well represented in UEC committees and decision-making bodies.
- UEC strongly supports Nordic Cycling activities.
- Seven Nordic Cycling countries will receive a combined  $\approx$  €18,000 in solidarity funding for 2025.
- UEC is willing to continue supporting Nordic commissaires by offering placements at UEC events. National federations just need to reach out to UEC.



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- Encouraged Nordic Cycling to submit joint development projects.

Enrico made a proposal to Nordic Cycling to give a presentation of Nordic Cycling's activities in 2026 UEC congress.

## 6. Discussion

The open discussion highlighted several cross-cutting themes:

### **Need for clearer structure and planning**

- Deadlines for applying to host Nordic Championships should be fixed (proposed: 1 December each year).
- Commissions need clearer expectations and annual deliverables.

### **Harmonising rules**

- Nordic rules should aim to remove unnecessary barriers for beginners and youth.

### **Sustainability of organising events**

- Organising road championships is expensive and volunteer-heavy; travel distances limit participation.

### **Cooperation in youth development**

- Nordic-wide camps seen as a highly valuable development tool.
- Coaches' training could be integrated into camps.

## 7. Discussing and deciding strategy for 2026 and onwards

### **Nordic Championships 2026**

To be held only in disciplines with stable participation and organisers:

- BMX
- XCO
- Gravel
- Other disciplines will reconsider their format for 2027.

### **Road & MTB: prepare new structures for 2027**

- Road Commission will design a Nordic Road Cup concept for youth, juniors, and women for 2027.



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- Estonia introduced an idea to ban TT equipment for junior riders in national championships. Sweden and Norway have also discussed this as a possibility.
- MTB Commission will continue exploring a Nordic XCO Cup for 2027.

## Youth Development

- Nordic Cycling supports opening the Estonian MTB youth camp (10–14) for Nordic participation in 2026.

## Commissaire and Coach Development

- Continue practical commissaire courses; seek UEC solidarity funding for 2027.
- Explore Nordic-led UCI Level 1–2 coaching courses and national cooperation.

## Coordinator Role

- According to rotation, Sweden is next to take over as coordinator.
- Before confirming, Nordic Cycling will contact Sweden to ensure they have time, resources, and willingness to take the role.
- Estonia will hand over all documents, templates, and procedural guidelines to simplify transition.

## Overall Conclusion

The meeting produced clear strategic direction for the next two years:

- Focus on strong disciplines in 2026, prepare renewed structures for 2027.
- Move toward Cup-based formats in road and MTB to improve participation and event sustainability.
- Strengthen youth pathways through camps and tours.
- Expand Nordic cooperation in commissaire and coach development.
- Improve structure, deadlines, and rule harmonisation to reduce barriers and increase engagement.