

# A Nordic Frontrunner and its Norwegian Legacy

– *a Norwegian Perspective on the Stockholm  
Centre for Commercial Law*

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## 1. Congratulations!

On behalf of Oslo Centre of Commercial Law (OCCL) and The Faculty of Law in Oslo, I extend our profound congratulations to the Stockholm Centre for Commercial Law (SCCL) on its 25th anniversary. Over the past quarter-century, SCCL has played an instrumental role in shaping Nordic commercial law, employing a remarkably successful approach:

Firstly, state of the art research and researchers. The SCCL has been at the cutting edge of research, nurturing a generation of leading scholars who have made important contributions to academia and public discourse. Their work has positioned the SCCL as leading in numerous areas of commercial law.

Secondly, state of the art seminars. The SCCL has hosted an incredible number of seminars, enhancing a continuous dialogue among practitioners, judges, academics, and other legal professionals with an interest in commercial law. These seminars have enriched understanding and collaboration within the field.

Thirdly, state of the art promotion of the Nordic legal community. The SCCL has been a strong advocate for Nordic legal thinking, actively working to strengthen the bonds between research communities in the Nordic countries. Through initiatives such as hosting Nordic seminars, accommodating numerous Nordic doctoral candidates and senior researchers for varying durations, and supporting the establishment and sustainability of similar

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centers in other Swedish universities and the OSCR in Norway, the SCCL has been key in promoting Nordic commercial Law.

The OCCL proudly acknowledges its Norwegian small-scale adaptation of the SCCL model, a testament to the important impact the SCCL has had on our approach to commercial law at the Faculty of Law in Oslo. It is no understatement to say that the SCCL has profoundly influenced our work, both within the Faculty of Law in general and at the OCCL in particular.

In this brief anniversary article, I aim to highlight the inspirational legacy of the SCCL and its enduring influence on the field of commercial law in Norway.

## 2. The Private Law Symposium

The Private Law Symposium exemplifies how inspiration can transcend national boundaries, from the SCCL to the OCCL and the Department of Private Law – via Oxford.

In the official presentation of the Private Law Symposium, its purpose is stated to be “to strengthen the collaboration between legal research and legal life in the area of private law. The symposium will be a meeting place for academics, lawyers, judges and authorities with an interest in private law issues. The symposium will promote private law discussions, by academics and practitioners analyzing key and current legal issues – from different points of view and with different approaches.”

The Symposium is a two-day event, from Thursday morning to Friday after lunch. The Symposium’s opening session is held in Gamle Festsal at Domus Academica, and addresses significant developments in modern private law from a Nordic perspective. The iconic surroundings of Gamle Festsal contribute to a ceremonial start for the Symposium, providing a setting that accommodates law students eager to participate, thereby bridging high-level legal lectures with legal education. Typically, the opening session features three Nordic participants who are leaders in their respective fields. The main part of the program is structured around two pillars consisting of subject-specific sessions. These pillars facilitate in-depth exploration and thorough discussion of particular themes from diverse perspectives and experiences. The Symposium concludes with the Viggo Hagstrøm memorial lecture, delivered by a distinguished Nordic scholar.

The origin of the term “symposium” can be traced back to ancient Greece. During a symposium in ancient Greece, guests are said to recline on couches, engage in discussions, enjoy entertainment, and participate in drinking games. Notably, the symposium was both a social and an intellectual occasion, reflecting the Greeks’ love for dialogue and discussion. In keeping with this tradition, there is a participants’ dinner on Thursday night, offering a more informal setting for attendees meet new colleagues, and allowing young professionals to engage with the more experienced.

When designing the inaugural Private Law Symposium in 2018, significant inspiration was drawn from the Stockholm Oxford Law Symposium. The insights gained from the Swedish-British Symposium in Oxford were instrumental in shaping the Private Law symposium’s distinctive program approach, aimed at fostering high-level private law discussions with a Nordic flavor. To achieve this, the organizing board is guided by three principles when creating panels. First, each panel must comprise a diverse group of participants, including academics, judges, lawyers, and other legal professionals, who can share their experiences from various perspectives. Second, the board must ensure a dynamic composition by balancing leading experts with emerging talent among the keynote speakers and panelists. Finally, the board should strive to select participants who can enrich the dialogue with a Nordic perspective.

Over the years, the Private Law Symposium has become a recognized event within the Nordic legal community, attracting participants from leading law firms, Supreme Courts, and universities across the Nordic countries. The strong support from our Swedish colleagues at the SCCL has been instrumental, evident in their substantial contributions to the program over the years. An example of the enthusiasm for establishing the Symposium is reflected in the prompt response from Johnny Herre, then a Supreme Court judge and later a professor at the SCCL. When approached by an assistant professor from the Faculty of Law at Oslo during a chance encounter at the Nordiske Förmögenhetsrättsdagarna 2017 at Hesselby Slott, Supreme Court Judge Herre was asked to deliver the inaugural Viggo Hagström memorial lecture. Despite not knowing the assistant professor, Supreme Court Judge Herre took only about three seconds to express his delight in accepting the invitation, and he has ever since been a great champion of the Symposium.

### 3. The SCCL's Mentorship and a Godfather Role to the OCCL

Professor Jan Kleineman, the founder and former director of the SCCL, can be described as the godfather of the OCCL. From the moment Dag Michaelsen, then Dean of the Faculty of Law, expressed interest in exploring the potential for a commercial law center, professor Kleineman generously shared his expertise with his Norwegian counterparts.

In February 2016, Kleineman traveled to Oslo to deliver a lecture on the emergence and significance of the SCCL. Like the proverb about God's mill, the university's mill also grinds slowly, and when it became clear a few years later that such a centre would indeed be founded, Kleineman mentored the entire project, allowing us to cultivate a similar, small-scale center to SCCL in 2018. Additionally, Kleineman ensured that the center was introduced to another institution he was mentoring at the time, the Affärsrättsligt Centrum at Lund University (ACLU), thereby further reinforcing the Nordic community in commercial law.

The support from SCCL was evident at the Grand Opening of the OCCL on October 30, 2019, when both professor Jan Kleineman and André Andersson, then partner at Mannheimer Swartling in Stockholm and board member of SCCL, attended to share insights and experiences from Scandinavia's leading centre.

### 4. OCCL – A small-scale centre in the Stockholm Centre Style

The OCCL was established in 2019, in cooperation between the Department of Private Law and the Scandinavian Institute of Maritime Law, as an arena for research on and dissemination of commercial Law.

In the OCCL's official presentation it is stated:

“Exchange of ideas between academia and practicing commercial lawyers, judges and government is particularly important in commercial law. An express aim of the Centre is to bring academia and practice together on a regular basis, as an arena for on-going discussions on key current legal issues. Bringing together different perspectives and approaches may foster new research questions and disseminate research to practitioners. A dynamic research environment will inspire younger generations to follow a career at the university.

The Centre has a Nordic profile and actively seeks cooperation with other Nordic centres for commercial law. We aim to strengthen the Nordic legal community within commercial law and to represent a Nordic voice in Europe and internationally. European networks within commercial law are also an important part of the Centre's activities."

The influence of the SCCL is unmistakable and has been instrumental in shaping the activities at the OCCL. The aim of the OCCL's activity is to foster an ongoing dialogue in commercial law among various stakeholders.

## 5. A Nordic Legal Family

For the past quarter-century, the SCCL has been a leading force in Nordic commercial law. Our shared legal heritage, often described as Nordic pragmatism, underscores the importance of maintaining an ongoing dialogue about the strengths and qualities of Nordic law. This continuous conversation aims to refine and enhance commercial law in the distinctively Nordic way.

A notable example of SCCL's commitment to Nordic engagement is not just the impressive array of Nordic seminars but also the initiative taken at Flädie in April 2024, where the SCCL organized the "Nordic Centre Meeting for Planning of Contact and Collaboration on a Nordic Basis." The meeting has fostered a Nordic collaboration on various initiatives, including seminars for doctoral students, the establishment of a Nordic Commercial Law Review, and several seminars focused on topics such as secured transactions and commercial arbitration.

The OCCL proud to be part of the SCCL's large Nordic legal family. We eagerly look forward to another 25 years of outstanding collaboration!

