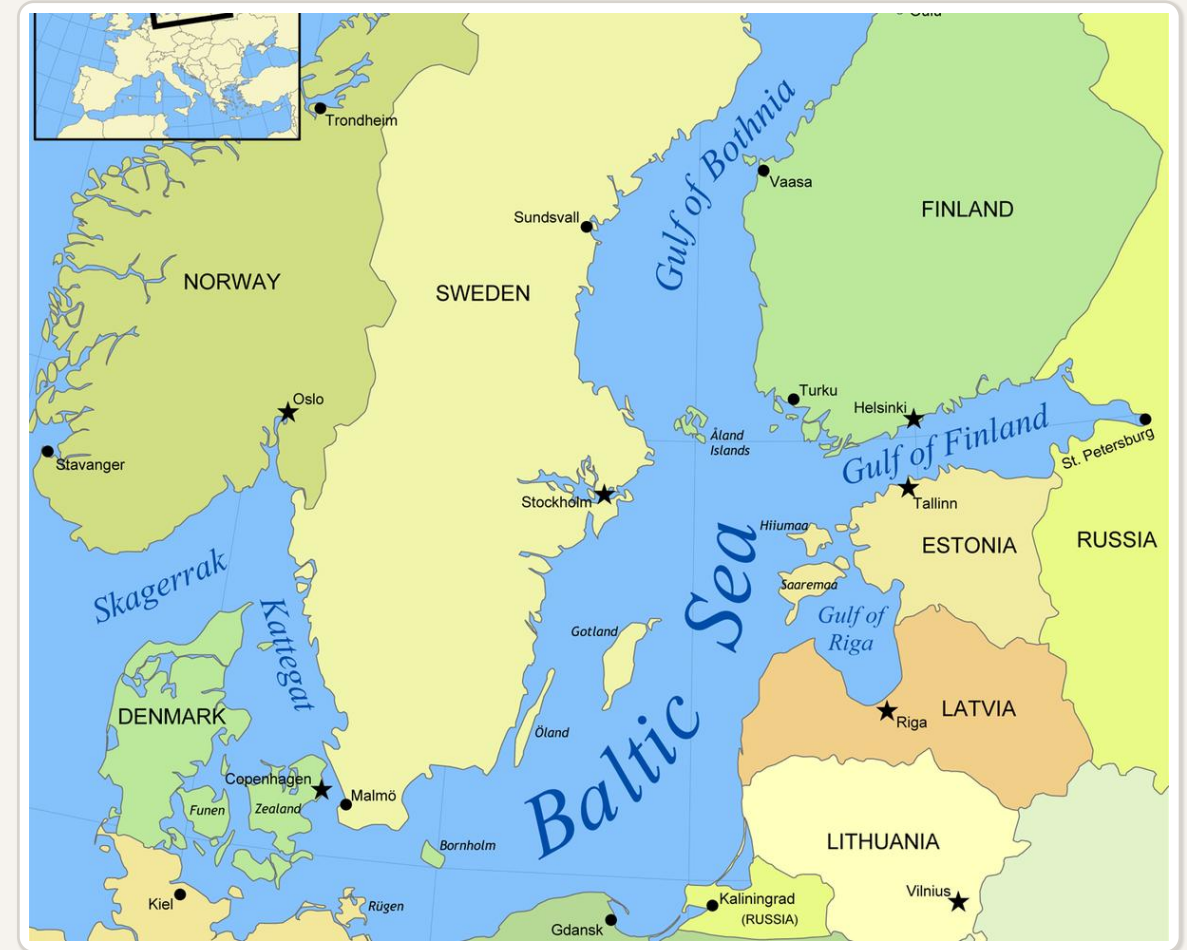


Alcohol age-limit policy moves

Nordic and Baltic region, Jan 2024 to Mar 2026

Presentation covers only the cases where something moved, excluding Denmark and Lithuania.

- Latvia, Sweden, Norway, Estonia, Greenland
- Purchase age, serving age, and work-related handling rules



Latvia



Sweden



Norway



Estonia



Greenland

Five live cases, moving in opposite directions

Tightening attempts

- Latvia, proposal to raise purchase age from 18 to 20, rejected in 2024.
- Greenland, expert recommendation to raise sale and serving age from 18 to 21, still pending.

Liberalising or labour-flexibility attempts

- Sweden, motion to lower the Systembolaget age from 20 to 18, rejected in 2025/26.
- Norway, proposals to let some 16-year-olds handle lower-strength alcohol at work under supervision, rejected in 2026.
- Estonia, ministry plan to let minors handle alcohol in service roles, withdrawn in late 2025.



Latvia

18→20



Sweden

20→18



Norway

16+ work



Estonia
minors at work



Greenland

18→21

Latvia

Tightening attempt

Rejected

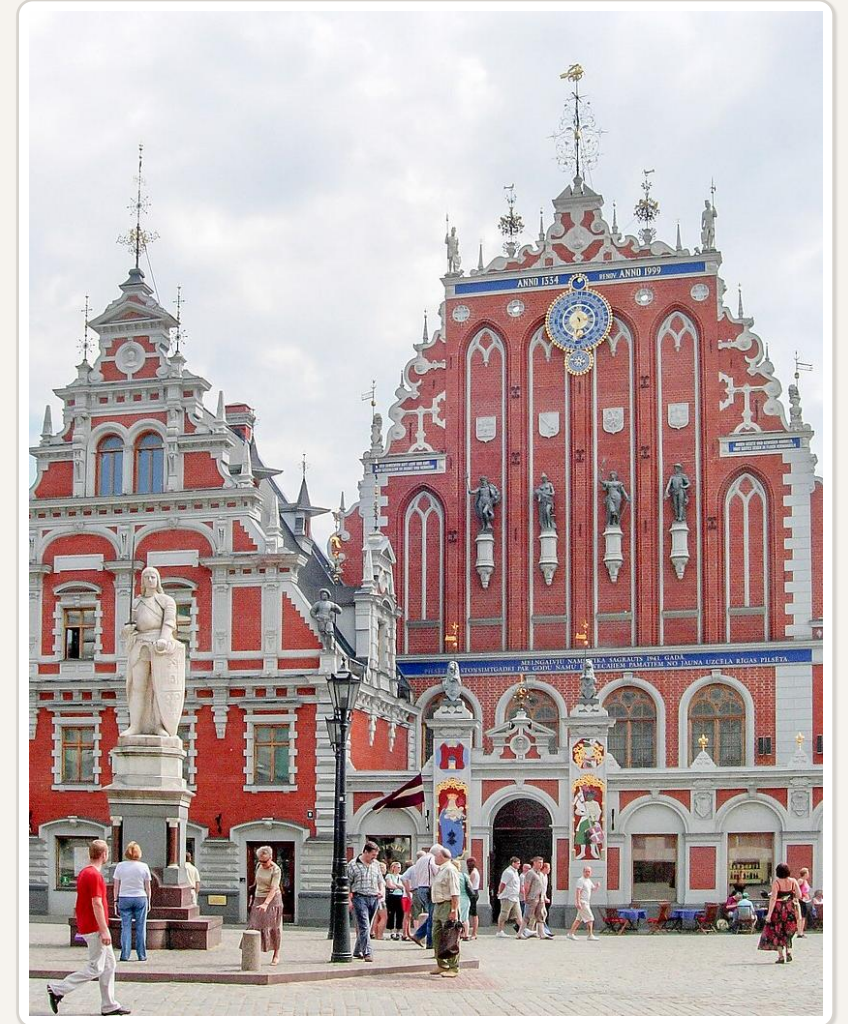
Alcohol purchase age stayed at 18.

What moved

In March 2024, the Saeima committee backed a rise to 20 for alcohol sales, alongside shorter retail hours and other restrictions.

Result

The Saeima later voted down the age increase. Latvia went on to tighten sales hours and advertising, but not the age threshold.



Sweden



Liberalising attempt

Rejected

Current rule

Buying alcohol in bars or restaurants starts at 18, but Systembolaget retail purchases require age 20.

What moved

A 2025/26 Riksdag motion proposed lowering the Systembolaget age limit from 20 to 18.

Proposers: Members of the **Sweden Democrats (SD)** and the **Center Party (C)** via several parliamentary motions (e.g., Motion 2025/26:165 and Motion 2025/26:837).

Status by March 2026

The motion was processed by the Social Affairs Committee, the committee recommended rejection, and the chamber rejected it.

Why it matters: Unlike Latvia and Greenland, the Swedish case moved toward looser retail access rather than stricter control.



Norway



Labour-flexibility attempt

Rejected

Current rule

Staff must normally be 18 or older to sell or serve alcohol. There are only narrow exceptions for supervised training.

What moved

In 2025/26, Fremskrittspartiet (Progress Party) proposed allowing 16-year-olds to sell, hand over and serve alcohol in groups 1 and 2 under supervision. Høyre (the Conservative Party) advanced a narrower proposal for supervised handover of group 1 alcohol.

Status by March 2026

The committee majority opposed changing the rule, and the proposals did not pass in Parliament.

The Norwegian debate was about staffing and youth employment, not consumer purchase age.



Estonia



Labour-flexibility attempt

Withdrawn

Current rule

Minors are generally barred from alcohol-handling service roles, except for unopened containers in storage or logistics.

What moved

In 2025, the Ministry of Economic Affairs floated looser youth-employment rules for hospitality. The idea evolved into a draft exemption that would have let 13+ workers prepare, offer for sale and sell alcoholic beverages in service establishments.

Status by March 2026

After heavy criticism, the ministry removed the alcohol clause from the final draft in December 2025.

Why it matters: Estonia shows how labour-shortage arguments can trigger alcohol-policy debates even without a formal age-limit bill reaching parliament.



Greenland



Tightening recommendation

Pending

Current rule

The current threshold is 18, but a new national alcohol strategy process reopened the question.

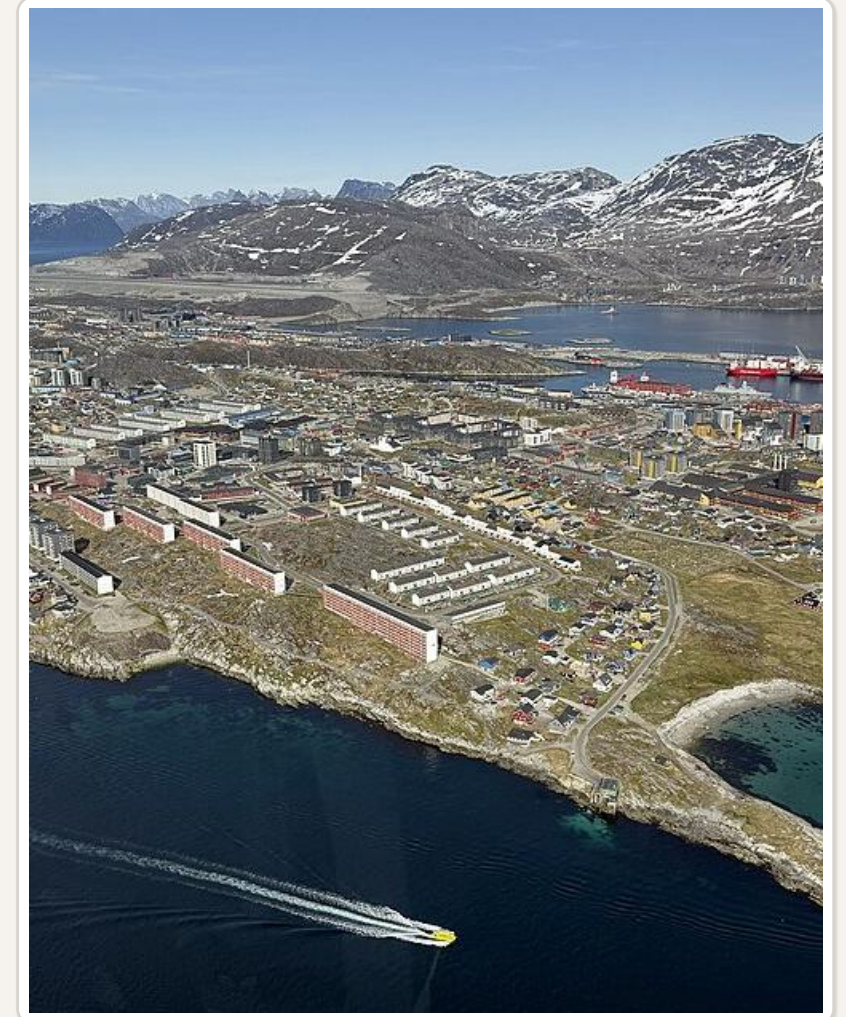
What moved

The expert recommendations say the age limit for alcohol sales and serving should be raised to 21 and enforced more strictly.

Status by March 2026

By October 2025, the Greenland government had submitted the recommendations to parliament as the basis for a broader political agreement. As of March 2026, this was still a live policy process.

Why it matters: This is the boldest still-active age-limit proposal in the region.



What the five cases say

The region did not move in one direction.

- Latvia tried and failed to tighten the purchase age.
- Greenland is the only place where a stronger age limit was still alive in the policy process by March 2026.
- Sweden, Norway and Estonia mainly debated liberalisation or staffing flexibility, not stricter youth protection.
- The sharpest divides were between public-health logic and labour-market or market-access arguments.

Directional picture

	Latvia	Tighten	Rejected
	Greenland	Tighten	Pending
	Sweden	Loosen	Rejected
	Norway	Loosen	Rejected
	Estonia	Loosen	Withdrawn