

## Equity markets in a global competitive environment and NOREX

The majority of Western European stock exchanges are now engaged in cooperation among themselves and many are currently examining the opportunity of strengthening their competitive positions still further. Major changes have therefore occurred in the scope and environment of stock exchanges over a very short period of time.

NOREX is a cooperative framework for Nordic stock exchanges to operate a joint securities market. It involves use of a collective trading system, SAXESS, and harmonized rules on market participation and trading practices. Formal cooperation within NOREX started up at the beginning of 1998 with participation by the Stockholm and Copenhagen exchanges. From the outset their vision was that NOREX would become a dynamic Nordic market capable of competing with others and attracting international investors. Rapid progress has been made towards that aim. ISE has now signed a cooperation agreement, the Oslo exchange is preparing formal participation and it is assumed that the three Baltic States, which have signed a declaration of intent to participate, will join after the middle of 2001.