



Nordic-Baltic Ministerial Meeting – 24 September in Reykjavik, Iceland
Ministers Responsible for Gender Equality

TAC/CP
24 September 2004
Journal no. 44001.15.003/04

NORDIC BALTIC CO-OPERATION ON GENDER EQUALITY 1998-2003

NORDIC BALTIC CO-OPERATION ON GENDER EQUALITY 1998-2003

CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME 1998-2000

The *first Nordic Baltic Co-operation Program* was adopted at a Nordic-Baltic Ministerial meeting in Oslo, Norway, December 7, 1997.

CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME 2001-2003

The *second Nordic Baltic Co-operation Program* was adopted at a Nordic-Baltic Ministerial meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania, June 15, 2001.

1. Governmental co-operation

Integration of a gender perspective in all activities has been the main goal of the Nordic Baltic co-operation. In the first phase much of the co-operation focused on introducing Nordic organization of the activities of the gender equality offices, and the establishing of national machineries in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In the second phase much attention has been in international co-operation and on introducing new knowledge and exchanging best practices.

Seminars have been arranged to discuss the role of national machineries, legislation, women's studies and research and the role of NGOs. Special seminars have been arranged for civil servants both in the municipalities as well as in the ministries in all three Baltic countries 1998-2003. The aim of the seminars has been to introduce gender mainstreaming as a working tool and method to integrate gender equality into all areas of society. At seminars gender equality policies in the Nordic countries and in EU have been presented. Nordic Gender Equality Ombudsmen have introduced the gender equality legislation of their countries. At the seminars both Nordic, Baltic and European experts have introduced a broad spectrum of different themes.

Yearly a *joint Baltic seminar* for civil servants has been arranged to exchange experience and best practices, as well as new aspects and ideas of gender mainstreaming policy.

Meetings have been arranged where the Nordic Executive Committee on Gender Equality (ÄK-JÄM) and their Baltic colleagues have discussed joint activities and co-operation.

2. Exchange of information

a. Conferences

From 1998 a series of conferences has been arranged within the framework of the Nordic Baltic Gender Equality Cooperation. The goal has been to gather together politicians, decision makers, civil servants, researchers and representatives from non-governmental organizations to exchange information, discuss how to develop strategies to increase women's participation in politics, and create new networks to encourage women to cooperation between the Nordic and the Baltic countries.

The first conference on **Women and Democracy** was arranged in Reykjavik in October 1999. It gathered 400 persons from the Nordic and Baltic countries, Russia and United States of America. The aim of the conference was to initiate new joint projects.

Gender Equality and the Future - 2nd Baltic Sea Women's conference was arranged in Helsinki in March 2000 and gathered almost 600 participants from 12 countries. At the conference four themes were discussed: A Society without Sexualized Violence, Different Paths to Gender Equality, Work and Life – A possibility to All and A Sea Full of Life. The workshops formulated their recommendations to parliaments, governments, authorities and organizations. A letter to Baltic Sea States Summit passed the recommendations from the workshops on Prostitution and Trafficking in Women and Violence against Women to the meeting of Prime Ministers of the Baltic Sea States in hopes that these proposals will be taken in consideration in the context of discussing the security of citizens.

Women & Democracy, The Second Conference Reykjavik – Vilnius 2001 was arranged in Vilnius in June 2001. The plenary sessions focused on *Future Challenges for Gender Equality Work* and on *Trafficking in Women: Prevention and Protection*. The conference gathered more than 600 participants from 13 countries. During the conference the Nordic and Baltic Ministers of Gender Equality met and decided to arrange a joint Nordic Baltic Campaign against Trafficking in Women in 2002.

The Third Baltic Sea Women's Conference Women and Democracy arranged in Tallinn, Estonia in February 2003 attracted more than 600 representatives of governmental institutions, research communities and non-governmental organizations. The conference discussed four main topics: *Women in Power and Decision-Making*, *Violence against Women*, *Women and Economy*, *Women and Media*. During the conference these topics were discussed from different aspects, especially focus was given to themes like *Democracy is more than Equal Rights and No democracy without Women*.

Gender Budgeting has been discussed at the conferences and seminars. The joint Nordic projects on integrating a gender perspective in the state budgets as well as the gender mainstreaming of in the Nordic Council of Ministers budget process has been introduced at both Nordic as well as international conferences. Gender Budgeting was also discussed at the Second Baltic-Nordic Conference on Women's Studies and Gender Research *Gender in fostering of Social Dialogue in March 2003*.

Women and entrepreneurship has also been discussed at the conferences from different aspects. The Nordic Investment Bank loans for women in the Baltic countries were launched at the conference in Reykjavik in 1999, and the results of the bank loan system have been presented at the conferences.

Men and gender equality has been a theme at conferences and seminars arranged in the Baltic countries. A seminar on *Working with men in crisis and men with violent behaviour* focused on methods developed to work with men with violent behaviour.

Youth and gender equality is a theme that was initiated in 2001 and a group from Estonia established a network to start Nordic Baltic discussion on gender equality issues.

b. Leaflets, newspapers and books

A **gender equality leaflet** *Gender Equality in the Baltic States – Co-operation and Development* included facts on legislation, politics, labour market, education, health and violence comparing the Nordic and the Baltic countries was published in 1999.

A **newsletter on gender equality in Russian language** was published from 1999-2000.

The Finnish **book introducing feminist theory**: *Avainsanat – 10 askelta feministiseen tutkimukseen (Keywords – 10 steps into feminist research)* edited by Marianne Liljeström and Anu Koivunen was translated to **Lithuanian and Latvian languages**. Parts of the book were translated into **Estonian language** in year 2002.

The **book project The Voices of Silent** initiated in 2000 in Estonia focus on violence against women, and the book was published in Estonian language in 2001. The book includes interviews with women, who have experienced violence and articles written by experts as medical doctors, lawyers, policemen, psychologists. The book initiated a public debate in Estonia, and was presented at the Nordic Gender Equality Ministerial meeting in November 2001 in Helsinki. The book was translated into Russian language in 2003. The book has been introduced and discussed at seminars in the Nordic and Baltic countries and NW Russia.

3. Women's studies and gender research

Women's Studies and Gender Research in the Baltic and Nordic Countries: mapping the situation '98 was arranged in Riga in October 1998. The conference was the **first Baltic and Nordic conference** arranged on **women's studies and gender research**.

Second Baltic Nordic Conference on Women's Studies and Gender Research *Gender in Fostering of Social Dialogue* was arranged by Women's Studies Centre at Siauliai University, Siauliai, Lithuania in March 2003. The conference gathered researchers from the Baltic and Nordic countries. Selected papers were published in English in the Lithuanian scientific journal *Socialiniai Mokslai* 2004, nr. 1 (43). All abstracts from the conference were also published in a book.

At **Women's Worlds Conference** in Tromsø, Norway in June 1999 a workshop on gender equality policy was arranged. At the Nordic House totally ten *Baltic and Russian Women's Associations and Women's Research Centres* were presented during the conference.

4. NGO co-operation

In 1999 a **mapping** on Nordic Baltic gender equality co-operation was carried out. A questionnaire was sent out to NGOs, women's research institutes and authorities to collect information.

Nordic Baltic NGO co-operation projects were arranged via **networks** such as Femina Borealis Network, Femina Baltica Network, Nordic Baltic Rural Women's Network and Nordic Baltic Network for Disabled Women. At seminars representatives of NGOs discussed themes as politics, power, economics, violence, health, education, youth, and entrepreneurship.

Women and decision making was discussed at a joint Baltic Nordic **seminar** *The Way Women Do It*. The target group of the seminar was women participating in the politics and political discussions at national and local level.

Representatives from Nordic and Baltic non-governmental organisations have been an important group participating in the **conferences** arranged in the Baltic Sea Region.

5. Prevent Violence against Women

A **mapping** on violence against women was carried out in 1999 in all three Baltic countries and in Northwest Russia.

The **Joint Nordic Baltic Campaign against trafficking in Women** was arranged in 2002 in all the eight countries (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden) taking part in the campaign. The campaign was a result of cooperation between the ministers of gender equality and ministers of justice in the Nordic and the Baltic countries. During the campaign three joint seminars were arranged, and a lot of national activities in each participating countries. The activities in the Baltic countries continued during 2003. A report of the campaign in 2002 and a report on the activities in the Baltic countries in 2003 are published. The aim of the joint campaign was to increase knowledge and awareness among the public, and to initiate discussion about the problems on trafficking in women. The joint campaign got much attention in media both in the Nordic and the Baltic countries and initiated a lot of discussions in all societies. In April 2003 the Nordic and Baltic ministers on Gender Equality, Justice and Interior met in Stockholm and agreed upon a statement and recommendations for future actions.

In 2003 Baltic experts on violence against women presented national reports on **strategies** on combating violence against women. The strategies include the mapping and analysis of the situation, the measures to be taken and the goals to be achieved. The experts visited several institutions in Norway to get an overview of the organization of the work combating violence against women, and introduced for some examples of good practices.

The Meetings of the Nordic and the Baltic Ministers of Gender Equality

1. 1997, December 7, Oslo, Norway (5+3 meeting)
2. 2001, June 15, Vilnius, Lithuania (5 + 3 meeting)

The meeting of the Nordic and Baltic Ministers of Gender Equality, Justice and Interior

3. 2003, April 9, Stockholm, Sweden

The main focus of the co-operation 1998-2000 was on:

- Governmental co-operation
- Co-operation on exchange of information
- Co-operation on women's studies and gender research
- Co-operation with NGOs
- Co-operation to prevent violence against women

The main themes of the co-operation 2001-2003 was on:

- Integrating a gender perspective into Baltic-Nordic programmes
- Integrating a gender perspective into financial policy
- Women and entrepreneurship
- Trafficking in women
- Violence against women
- Men and gender equality
- Youth and gender equality

Nordic Baltic Working Group on Gender Equality

A Nordic Baltic Working Group with representatives from the Nordic and the Baltic gender equality units was appointed by the Executive Committee on Gender Equality in April 1998 for a period ending in December 2000. In August 2001 a working group was appointed for a new period to the end of 2003. The working group has been responsible for planning the annual activities and to set up a budget in accordance with the Nordic Baltic cooperation program. The working group has met regularly during 1998-2003. The activities have been financed through the Nordic Council of Ministers Adjacent Area Program.