

Approved by the Council of Ministers
for Gender Equality
February 12, 2008
No. 08-00096-15



Nordic co-operation programme for gender equality 2008



1. Nordic co-operation

1.1 Co-operation in the Nordic countries

In spring 2005, the Nordic Council of Ministers for Gender Equality adopted the 2006–2010 Nordic Co-operation Programme for Gender Equality. Entitled *Focus on Gender: Working toward an Equal Society*, it serves as the foundation for gender equality work undertaken in the five Nordic countries and three autonomous regions. The Nordic Council approved the co-operation programme in its session in October 2005. In accordance with the Nordic Council's recommendations, the programme is supplemented with annual action plans.

Over three decades of working toward gender equality, the Nordic Council of Ministers has aimed for full gender equality in the Nordic societies. Equality between the genders means that power and influence and caring for one another are divided equally between women and men and that they share the same rights, obligations and opportunities in all areas of life in a society that is free from gender-based violence.

Taking into account the different skills, knowledge and experiences of men and women in all areas of the society creates a better society for everyone. To achieve a truly equal society, it is absolutely essential that men participate actively in gender equality work.

Primary action areas in 2006–2010

The Nordic countries engage in a broad scope of gender equality work, and the Nordic Council of Ministers is obliged to limit its focus on several key areas.

In 2006–2010, the Nordic Council of Ministers has chosen to prioritise two main action areas:

- Gender and power
- Gender and youth

Both initiatives are aimed at taking on issues where the Nordic countries and autonomous regions share a common interest and that yield a common Nordic advantage. Concrete initiatives are formulated in annual action plans and presented for approval to the Ministers for Gender Equality.

Other action areas

During 2006–2010, the Council of Ministers will also work to integrate gender equality into the area of culture and communication.

In 2008, the project that studies prostitution in the Nordic countries will come to an end, and the project that focuses on *gender and power* will enter into an active implementation phase.

1.2 The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality core objectives

Nordic gender equality work is founded on co-operation among the Nordic countries and autonomous regions in accordance with the guidelines described in a mission statement of the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality, approved by the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality on October 15, 2007 (Appendix 1).

1.3 Primary action areas during the 2008 Swedish presidency

A strong focus during the Swedish presidency will be to work together in the Nordic countries to eliminate the exclusion of particular groups and individuals when it comes to their full opportunities to participate in society in the areas of politics, education, housing and, not least, working life. Work will also focus on creating a society in which women and men have the same opportunities in working life and private life.

Work on issues addressed during previous presidencies will continue during Sweden's presidency. It is extremely important to continue the process of modernising and reforming Nordic co-operation and to implement gender mainstreaming within the Nordic Council of Ministers. Since 2002, during each country's presidency, the Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality has arranged gender mainstreaming seminars for the chair persons of the

committee of senior officials and the employees of the Nordic Council of Ministers secretariat. This work will carry on during the Swedish presidency.

A project to study prostitution in the Nordic countries was launched in 2007. With the aim of obtaining new knowledge about prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes and about how the legal system and social safety nets address these issues in the Nordic countries, the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality decided to use the legislation of each Nordic country as the starting point for the initiative. The project is implemented by the Nordic Gender Institute (NIKK). A final conference to present the project's findings will be arranged in the course of Sweden's presidency.

A seminar for various experts will also be arranged, with a focus on young people and the ways that different social actors, including schools, deal with gender equality issues as part of teaching ethics and values.

Internationally, and in connection with the 2008 session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the Swedish presidency will invite the Nordic Ministers for Gender Equality to a joint luncheon, as decided at the October 15, 2007 ministerial meeting. In conjunction with the session there will also be a joint-Nordic seminar on "Men's violence against women – honour-related violence and oppression and measures to combat trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes".

The Swedish presidency will also consider the possibility of carrying out one or some of the recommendations made by the Nordic Youth Panel.

Work to develop methods of co-operation with the Nordic Gender Institute (NIKK) will continue throughout the year.

1.4 The Nordic Gender Institute (NIKK)

The Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality will work together with the Nordic Gender Institute (NIKK) on issues that the Nordic Ministers for Gender Equality have established as priorities in the Nordic Co-operation Programme for Gender Equality. NIKK initiates, co-ordinates and carries out gender research projects to study important questions relating to gender equality in order to infuse a higher level of information and awareness to political discussions and initiatives. NIKK has a contract with the Nordic Council of Ministers for 2008–10.

The project to study prostitution in the Nordic countries continues and will conclude in 2008.

Through 2008, the EU-financed project, *Gendered Citizenship in Multicultural Europe – FEMCIT*, will continue. NIKK is responsible for a sub-project in social citizenship and parental policy, which is carried out in collaboration with various actors in the political sphere and in gender equality administration.

NIKK's magazine will publish three issues during 2008. NIKK's website will take on a central role in the institute's information dissemination, and its language profile will also be expanded. NIKK supports *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Studies* by providing marketing and information assistance. In 2007–08, *NORMA – Nordisk tidskrift for maskulinitetsstudier*, the Nordic men's studies publication, will be published by NIKK in collaboration with the Norwegian Universitetsforlaget. In 2009, ownership will be transferred to a Nordic association.

2. International co-operation

During 2008, the Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality will continue to forge co-operation with various international organisations in accordance with resolutions of the Ministers for Co-operation in December 2002 and August 2003.

2.1 Co-operation with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

The Baltic-Nordic Co-operation Programme for Gender Equality for 2007–2008 was approved at the NB-8 ministers' meeting in 2006. The co-operation programme is intended to support the integration of gender equality in political decision-making processes in the Baltic countries at the local, regional and national level. Legislation, working life, education and the economy are all areas that must be explored and discussed from a gender equality standpoint.

The Nordic and Baltic Ministers for Gender Equality will meet in Estonia in 2008 with an agenda of discussing and deciding on a new co-operation programme for 2009–2010.

2.2 Co-operation with Northwest Russia

During 2008, the Committee of Senior Officials will continue to work with the municipal administration of the city of St. Petersburg in accordance with the *Protocol of Intent* signed by Nordic Council of Ministers Secretary General Halldór Ásgrímsson and St. Petersburg Governor Valentina Matviyenko in July 2007.

2.3 EU Co-operation

The European Union's *Northern Dimension* focuses on issues that affect the northern parts of Europe. The Nordic Council of Ministers will continue to develop strategies for working alongside the EU's Northern Dimension Programme and the *Partnership on Public Health and Social Wellbeing*. All work within this collaboration will incorporate gender mainstreaming.

2.4 Co-operation with the United Nations

Nordic gender equality work within the United Nations is founded on the Beijing Platform signed by UN member states in Beijing in 1995, as well as on Beijing +5. Co-operation generally takes the form of participation in annual meetings of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). In connection with the Commission's 52nd Session in 2008, the Swedish presidency will arrange a joint-Nordic seminar on the theme "Men's violence against women – honour-related violence and oppression and measures to combat trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes", as determined by the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality on October 15, 2007.

3. Budget, projects and activities in 2008

The total budget for 2008 is DKK 8,300,000, of which DKK 3,300,000 will be allocated by the Council of Ministers for various projects and DKK 5,000,000 is earmarked for the Nordic Gender Institute (NIKK).

3.1 Expert seminar

A seminar for experts will be arranged in the fall of 2008 to focus on young people, including ways in which various social actors, including schools, deal with questions of gender equality as part of teaching ethics and values. The Committee of Senior Officials will invite the Committee of Senior Officials on Education and Nordbuk, the Nordic Children's and Youth Committee, to collaborate on the subject.

Council of Ministers financing in 2008
Strategic funding in 2008
(Swedish presidency)

DKK 300,000
DKK 300,000

Total DKK 600,000

3.2 Strategy seminar

The Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality and NIKK will arrange a strategy seminar in the spring of 2008 to discuss NIKK's broader goals, its role as the most important instrument in implementing the Nordic Co-operation Programme for Gender Equality, as well as NIKK's position and responsibilities in Nordic co-operation in general.

3.3 Gender and power

At their meeting on October 15, 2007, the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality assigned the Committee of Senior Officials with the task of implementing a Nordic project with the topic of *gender and power*. Initially the project focuses only on issues of power and influence in decision-making bodies. The aims of the joint-Nordic project are:

- By using available research findings and statistics, compare the representation of women and men in decision-making positions in different sectors of society in the Nordic countries and autonomous regions;
- Uncover and analyse the reasons behind existing gender segregation;
- Compile information about endeavours carried out in the Nordic countries and autonomous regions that have been successful in achieving more equal distribution of social power and influence between women and men;
- Present measures carried out in the Nordic countries and autonomous regions that have lead to a more equal gender distribution in positions of power; and
- Evaluate the gender equality policy resources and the opportunities for influencing gender equality policy in the Nordic countries and autonomous regions from the standpoint of structures of power.

The Ministers for Gender Equality would like to see co-operation in this project between the Nordic Innovation Centre (NiCe) and the Nordic Gender Institute (NIKK).

Council of Ministers financing in 2007

Total DKK 400,000

Council of Ministers financing in 2008

Total DKK 1,000,000

3.4 Prostitution in the Nordic countries

In 2007, a Nordic project to study prostitution in the Nordic countries was launched. It is expected to produce new information about how prostitution and human trafficking for the purpose of prostitution are addressed by the judicial system and in the social services network in the Nordic countries. The project seeks to do the following:

- Map out legislative and other measures intended to combat prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes in the different Nordic countries.
- Assess the incidence and awareness of prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes in the Nordic countries, as well as the effect that legislation and other measures have had in terms of incidence.
- Study and analyse attitudes among women and men toward the purchase of sexual services.

NIKK has been assigned to implement the project and to contribute to its financing with a total of DKK 1,150,000. The Committee of Senior Officials has set up a Nordic advisory group to monitor the project.

Council of Ministers financing in 2006

DKK 100,000

Council of Ministers financing in 2007

DKK 1,000,000

Total DKK 1,100,000

3.5 Final conference on prostitution in the Nordic countries

The project studying prostitution in the Nordic countries will come to a close in 2008. The results and findings will be presented at a final conference arranged in collaboration with NIKK.

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Council of Ministers financing in 2008 | DKK 300,000 |
| Strategic financing in 2008 (Swedish presidency) | DKK 300,000 |
| | Total DKK 600,000 |

3.6 Gender mainstreaming at the Nordic Council of Ministers

Committee of Senior Officials chairpersons and Nordic Council of Ministers secretariat employees will participate in a training seminar on gender mainstreaming.

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Council of Ministers financing in 2008 (Swedish presidency) | Total DKK 100,000 |
|--|--------------------------|

3.7 Gender and youth

During the Swedish presidency, work with gender and youth issues will be a focal point, as per the resolution of the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality on October 15, 2007. During the year, the Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality will investigate possibilities of implementing one or some of the recommendations developed by the Nordic Youth Panel, to be carried out in collaboration with Nordbuk, the Nordic Children's and Youth Committee.

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Council of Ministers financing in 2008 (Swedish presidency) | Total DKK 100,000 |
|--|--------------------------|

3.8 Human trafficking for sexual purposes

During 2008, together with the committees of senior officials on social security and health care and on legislation, the Ministers for Gender Equality will prioritise and pay special attention to continuing to discuss Nordic Council recommendations regarding human trafficking and the creation of a common Nordic strategy to combat human trafficking for sexual purposes. The Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality joins the committees on social security and health care and on legislation in inviting international organisations and task forces to a meeting in Copenhagen to discuss how initiatives and activities aimed at combating trafficking for sexual purposes can be rendered more effective, and with better co-ordination.

In the spring of 2008, a Nordic-Baltic-Russian interdisciplinary conference will be arranged in St. Petersburg to address human trafficking for sexual purposes. The conference is directed at officials (working in the areas of gender equality, social services or health care, or as police officers, prosecutors etc.), experts, researchers and NGOs. The objective is to discuss ways to improve co-operation to effectively combat human trafficking for sexual purposes.

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Council of Ministers financing in 2007 | Total DKK 200,000 |
|--|--------------------------|

3.9 Multi-faceted anti-discrimination policy

During Finland's presidency in 2007, NIKK created a report concerning a multi-faceted anti-discrimination policy (on existing measures in the legislation and public administrations of the Nordic countries against discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnic background, religion, sexual orientation, age or physical ability).

A conference will be arranged in 2008 to present and discuss NIKK's report among administrators in the area of gender equality, legal professionals and researchers. The expert seminar will be arranged in co-operation with and with partial financing by NIKK.

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Council of Ministers financing in 2008 | Total DKK 300,000 |
|--|--------------------------|

3.10 Importance of cultural co-operation for gender equality

Supporting the arts, folk culture and artist exchange, and co-ordinating Nordic art and cultural life are important aspects of Nordic co-operation. Incorporating gender equality into this central area of co-operation can help reinforce and renew the cultural co-operation. Gender

has a clear significance when we consider what is produced within art, and who produces it. Gender is also meaningful in how art and culture are transmitted.

The Nordic Council of Ministers will make broad efforts to include in the Nordic agenda any issues or problems that are connected to gender, culture and communication. In this context, it is relevant to consider how we, through art and culture, can work toward gender equality and integration.

During 2008, a follow-up on the 2006 seminar that explored the importance of cultural co-operation for gender equality will be arranged in co-operation and with the co-financing of the Committee of Senior Officials on Nordic Culture.

Council of Ministers financing in 2007

Total DKK 100,000

3.11 Organisations' participation in Nordic co-operation

Nordic networks and organisations organising joint-Nordic projects in 2008 can apply for project financing. It is important for various networks and civic organisations to have the opportunity to carry out various gender equality projects which discuss common Nordic issues and to develop a common Nordic position on current gender equality issues.

Council of Ministers financing in 2008

Total DKK 200,000

3.12 Co-operation with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

In 2006, the Nordic and Baltic Ministers for Gender Equality adopted a Baltic-Nordic Co-operation Programme on Gender Equality for 2007–2008.

Council of Ministers financing in 2008

Total DKK 200,000

3.13 Co-operation with Northwest Russia

The Nordic Council of Ministers will work to achieve increased visibility for its work in order to promote greater interest among Russian authorities to further develop co-operation.

In 2008, in accordance with the *Protocol of Intent*, co-operation with Northwest Russia will be developed further.

Council of Ministers financing in 2008

Total DKK 300,000

3.14 CSW 2008 – Nordic Side Event

A joint-Nordic seminar will be arranged in connection with the 52nd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Council of Ministers financing in 2008

Total DKK 50,000

3.15 CSW 2008 – Nordic luncheon

The Swedish presidency will host the Nordic Ministers for Gender Equality, the Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers, and one representative from each country to a luncheon in connection with the 52nd Session of the CSW.

3.16 Information and publications

The web page gender.norden.org provides information about Nordic co-operation. The countries will also continue to disseminate information about Nordic gender equality policy through Nordic Council of Ministers fact sheets, reports, and various seminars and conferences.

Council of Ministers financing in 2008

Total DKK 300,000

3.17 Planning and follow-up

DKK 250,000 is allocated for planning and follow-up of Nordic gender equality co-operation.

Council of Ministers financing in 2008

Total DKK 250,000

4. NIKK – The Nordic Gender Institute

NIKK's overarching task is to support the implementation of the current gender equality programme and to engage in active dialogue with the Nordic Council of Ministers for Gender Equality as well as the Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality and the presidency, to ensure a comprehensive, well-functioning Nordic approach to gender equality policy.

NIKK functions as a key resource for the Nordic Council of Ministers in the practical implementation of the gender equality programme. NIKK initiates, co-ordinates and implements projects that examine important gender equality issues in order to infuse a higher level of information and awareness to political discussions and initiatives. Projects may consist of reports, surveys or research projects that take up the themes defined in the co-operation programme.

NIKK also monitors the progress of gender research and promotes it within and outside of the Nordic countries to support and enrich Nordic gender politics. NIKK's task is to function as an arena for the users and producers of gender-related information and knowledge in the Nordic countries, and to diversify its methods of information dissemination to more effectively popularise research findings among an ever greater audience, thereby supporting and enriching public debate. NIKK also works in close co-operation with Nordic information and documentation organisations to co-ordinate all information and documentation that pertains to gender research and gender equality.

Council of Ministers appropriation for 2008

Total DKK 5,000,000

5. Calendar for 2008

5.1 Activities arranged by the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality and the Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality

| | |
|--------------|---|
| April 24 | Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality meeting in Stockholm |
| May 27-28 | Council of Ministers for Gender Equality meeting, Kuressaare, Saaremaa, Estonia |
| May 27-28 | NB-8 Ministers' Meeting in Kuressaare, Saaremaa, Estonia |
| September 18 | Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality meeting in Reykjavik |
| December 11 | Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality meeting in Copenhagen |

5.2 Activities arranged during the Swedish presidency

| | |
|----------------|---|
| February 26 | Nordic side-event, CSW, New York |
| April 23 | Strategy seminar with the Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality and NIKK, Stockholm |
| October 16-17 | Prostitution in the Nordic countries, final conference |
| November 20-21 | Expert seminar, see 3.1, Stockholm** |

5.3 Activities arranged by the Nordic Gender Institute (NIKK)

| | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| February 4-5 | NIKK board meeting, Oslo |
|--------------|--------------------------|

5.4 Other activities

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| October 27-29 | Nordic Council session, Helsinki |
|---------------|----------------------------------|

Nordic Council of Ministers

APPENDIX 1**MINISTERS FOR GENDER EQUALITY MEETING,
OCTOBER 15, 2007, KÖNIGSTEDT HERRGÅRD,
VANTAA (VANDA), FINLAND**

Store Strandstræde 18
 DK-1255 København K
 Tel +45 3396 0200
 Fax +45 3396 0202
www.norden.org

9 November 2007
 07-00866-19

To
 Secretary General

Cc

From
 Council of Ministers for Gender Equality

Re
 Council of Ministers for Gender Equality mission statement

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS FOR GENDER EQUALITY MISSION STATEMENT

Approved 15.10.2007

1. Introduction

The active work on behalf of gender equality that characterises the Nordic countries is an essential aspect of their democratic societies.

Gender equality means that both women and men have the same opportunities to shape society and their own lives – that power, influence and caring for one another are divided equally between women and men. Women and men share the same rights, obligations and opportunities in all areas of life, in a society that is free from gender-based violence.

The Nordic welfare societies are facing many of the same challenges, and can therefore benefit from sharing experiences, exchanging knowledge and engaging in political dialogue. Their co-operation in the area of gender equality is founded on a shared tradition and will yield mutual benefits to the Nordic countries and autonomous regions. This is often referred to as the "Nordic advantage".

Gender equality is a crucial aspect of Nordic identity, and it is important to promote the Nordic viewpoint on gender to other parts of the world, including the EU, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. Gender equality is also a prerequisite, if the Nordic societies want to maintain and improve their position as a global centre for innovation.

Nordic gender equality policy is naturally affected by broader societal developments and by a number of different actors in both the private and public sectors, including labour market parties and non-profit organisations.

The modern Nordic gender equality work is faced with many new challenges, such as intensifying globalisation, increasingly multicultural societies, an ageing population, and changing views among young

people on gender and its impact on their opportunities. A changing society requires a gender equality policy that is able to adapt to ever new situations.

2. The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality mission statement

The mission statement of the Ministers for Gender Equality is the most important policy document of the Council of Ministers. The mission statement creates a profile for the Council of Ministers, its co-operation endeavours and the achieved results, and will help to disseminate outcomes to the greater public. The core objectives will form the starting point for all co-operation programmes, action plans, and other documents that present the work carried out under the auspices of the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality.

The 2006–2010 co-operation programme is entitled *"Focus on Gender: Working toward an Equal Society"*. The co-operation programme underlines the importance of continuing to work on gender mainstreaming. Beyond that, the programme focuses on two main themes:

1. Gender and power
2. Gender and youth

Initiatives and activities within these areas address issues that all of the Nordic countries and autonomous regions have a common interest in solving and that produce a common Nordic benefit.

2.1 Goals and priorities

Nordic gender equality work is founded on co-operation between the Nordic countries and autonomous regions.

Nordic gender equality policy should also play a role in neighbouring countries, and form the role of the Nordic countries in Europe and in various international entities where the Nordic countries are represented.

Vision

- Nordic co-operation on behalf of gender equality must be the best in the world and act as a model for other countries. Nordic gender equality policy must play a significant role in the development of the Nordic countries, in the EU, and in other international contexts in which the Nordic countries participate.

Goals

- Gender equality must be integrated into the work carried out by all the Nordic councils of ministers.
- The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality must engage in well-developed co-operation with the other councils of ministers on current political issues.
- To develop a common Nordic gender equality policy, new partners must be sought and new alliances made.
- The views of young women and men must be clearly incorporated into Nordic gender equality co-operation.
- The exchange of information and experiences between the gender equality entities of the different Nordic countries must work seamlessly and efficiently in all relevant areas to bring the greatest benefit to each country and autonomous region.
- The common Nordic core values that are part of Nordic gender equality policy must be clearly profiled in all international contexts.

Achieving the goals will require that:

- The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality continually monitors the work of other councils of ministers in order to ensure that gender mainstreaming is advanced in all policy areas of the Nordic Council of Ministers.
- The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality follows up and reports on the progress of integrating gender equality into the practical work of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Nordic Council and all other entities working in conjunction with them, and proposes measures for improvements when necessary.
- The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality reports annually to the Nordic Council on the impact of gender mainstreaming in Nordic co-operation.
- The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality initiates specific gender equality measures whenever necessary.
- The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality continues to develop co-operation with other councils of ministers on current political issues.

- The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality aims to forge new alliances and identify new partners in development work.
- The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality focuses on the views of young people regarding gender equality, including their own methods of implementing it in practice in different areas (vocational choice, attitude toward the other gender, violence in intimate relationships, and purchase of sexual services).
- The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality takes on the co-ordination and exchange of experiences between the Nordic countries, so that they are able to benefit from one another's experiences, findings and data and materials, including, for example, national data and materials, new production of common Nordic materials, joint campaigns etc.
- The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality works for promoting common, Nordic values within the area of gender equality in various international contexts in areas where the Nordic countries share a similar situation or viewpoint.

2.2 Prioritised core objectives in gender equality policy, as laid out in the Co-operation Programme for Gender Equality for 2006-2010

The idea is that co-operation on core objectives will contribute to more effective national work on gender equality. Nordic work on behalf of gender equality must produce a common Nordic benefit and create synergy effects. The work must also bring visibility to gender equality policy and its goals and methods in the Nordic and in other countries.

Gender mainstreaming

- Continue to promote gender mainstreaming in all areas of society.

Gender and power

- Increase the representation of women in top positions in working life and in politics.
- Develop methods for achieving equal pay for women and men for work that is equal or of equal value.
- Get men to assume their share of unpaid work.
- Develop a better system for combining work and private life.
- Work in a preventive and goal-oriented way to stop men's violence against women, including violence and oppression in the name of honour.
- Strengthen efforts to combat human trafficking for sexual purposes, especially in co-operation with neighbouring countries.
- Form partnerships to advance gender equality within different ethnic minorities.

Gender and youth

- Change conceptions of gender equality and gender roles among young women and men.
- Undertake to change the traditional occupational and educational choices that girls and boys make.
- Form partnerships to advance gender equality in sports.

3. Working methods

3.1 Nordic co-operation

Nordic co-operation is founded on a co-operation treaty signed in 1962 ([Helsinki Treaty](#)), and amended many times since then. The treaty set up the Nordic Council of Ministers as the formal forum for co-operation between the governments of the Nordic countries. The ultimate responsibility for co-operation within the Nordic Council of Ministers lies with the Prime Ministers. Co-operation is based on mutual understanding and utilises the principle of consensus. It is not supranational. Each country and the autonomous regions nominate a Minister for Nordic Co-operation for the Nordic Committee for Co-operation, which is responsible for the overall co-ordination of Nordic co-operation. The Nordic Council of Ministers consists of several councils of ministers, of which the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality is one.

The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality are responsible for co-operation in the area of Nordic gender equality politics. Through policy development, the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality and the Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality shape the content of Nordic gender equality work. The Ministers for Gender Equality convene annually to discuss and decide on projects or activities that further the work on behalf of Nordic gender equality policy. Because the scope of gender equality work in the Nordic countries and autonomous regions is quite broad, co-operation focuses on a limited number of areas. The framework for the Nordic Co-operation Programme is set in five-year plans approved by the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality together with the Nordic Council. The Co-operation Programme is

supplemented with annual action plans devised by the current presidency in collaboration with the Nordic Council of Ministers secretariat.

The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality works together with the Nordic Council to issue recommendations and reports and to come up with the co-operation programme.

The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality employs various resources to carry out their core objectives. The most important of these are as follows:

The Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality

The Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality, supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers secretariat, prepares resolutions and presents and monitors all activities of the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality in the Nordic and other countries. The Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality also monitors and reports on the degree to which the allotted resources have been effective in implementing planned activities.

NMRS (Nordic Council of Ministers Secretariat)

The central task of the Nordic Council of Ministers secretariat is to ensure that the resolutions made by the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality are fulfilled. The secretariat focuses on serving the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality and the Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality and contributes to the development of policy. The department for culture, legislation and gender equality (KJUL) employs an advisor, who is responsible for co-ordinating Nordic gender equality work, and a co-ordinator who devotes 50% of her/his time to gender equality work. The chief of the department directs the work of the secretariat in this area.

NIKK (Nordic Gender Institute)

The institute is a transnational resource and information centre on gender research and gender equality policies in the Nordic countries. Among other things, the institute links gender equality research to gender equality policy. NIKK's expertise is used to realise the core objectives of the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality and to implement its five-year plans, as well as to support the current president in realising the annual action plan and/or carry out other projects selected by the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality.

Project and working groups

The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality can set up time-limited projects and working groups (physical and/or virtual) to carry out specific tasks or policy analyses consistent with the political priorities of the core objectives. All working groups and networks report directly to the Committee of Senior Officials for Gender Equality.

Networks

Expert networks (physical and/or virtual) for Nordic gender equality policy can be established to implement the core objectives of the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality in various international contexts. A common Nordic approach to planning, preparing and defining viewpoints, proposals and/or joint presentations can substantially increase the effectiveness and impact of the Nordic viewpoint.

Communications department at the secretariat

The communications department helps to profile the significance of Nordic gender equality policy, for example in Nordic co-operation on globalisation, an outcome of a report on the Nordic region as a global centre for innovation.

National advocates for gender equality in the Nordic countries

When beneficial, co-operation can occur through institutions with departments/ministries, national authorities, gender research entities, women's and men's organisations and researchers.

3.2 Co-operation with neighbouring areas

Nordic-Baltic co-operation (NB-8)

The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality have formalised co-operation with the Baltic countries in a co-operation programme "*Nordic-Baltic Gender Equality Co-operation Programme*". Ministers responsible for gender equality in the Nordic and Baltic countries meet every other year to discuss and agree on common priorities. Regular co-operation takes place between government officials.

West Nordic co-operation

Within the framework of Nordic co-operation the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality also works to advance gender equality in the northwest region and will continue in the future to develop West Nordic and Arctic co-operation in gender equality together with other ministerial councils, when relevant.

Co-operation with Northwest Russia

Co-operation with Northwest Russia is carried out in accordance with Nordic Council of Ministers guidelines or through multilateral agreements between individual countries. Arctic and Barents areas are included in the co-operation.

3.3 Other international co-operation

There is a lot of international interest in Nordic gender equality policies. A core aspect of the gender equality legislation in the Nordic countries and autonomous regions is the ban on discrimination on the basis of gender. The Nordic countries and autonomous regions share the same goal of achieving gender equality, but each employs different methods toward reaching this goal. Awareness of the importance of gender equality in private life, within the family, in working life and in society in general is even more important when considering the future demographic challenges facing many countries. Within Nordic gender equality co-operation, the areas that are of particular significance in a European and/or global context is the participation of women in the labour market, economic life and decision-making processes, combined with high fertility levels, as well as legislation and regulation for the advancement and securing of gender equality, and ways of strengthening and organising gender equality work in different countries or autonomous regions.

EU

EU co-operation consists primarily of information exchange as well as mutual support for proposals set forth by the Nordic countries and the three Baltic countries, whenever their aims coincide and whenever otherwise possible. Future co-operation will also comprise the up-coming gender equality institute in Vilnius, when relevant.

Council of Europe

Co-operation with the Council of Europe mostly takes the form of information exchange as well as mutual support for proposals set forth by the Nordic countries and the three Baltic countries, whenever their aims coincide and whenever otherwise possible.

United Nations

The Nordic countries co-operate with the UN through gender equality initiatives and by helping to uphold the agreement reached by UN member states in Beijing in 1995 (The Beijing Platform) and the Beijing +5. Co-operation with the UN takes place through its various organs dealing with gender equality, in particular DAW (Division for the Advancement of Women), OSAGI (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women), UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women), UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) and annual meetings of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

3.4 Information

The Council of Ministers for Gender Equality will profile itself by disseminating information about its core activities and other relevant activities through updated, high-quality publications in print or web format (<http://gender.norden.org>). The communications department of the secretariat is always consulted when profiling common, Nordic gender equality policies. Information can show, for example, that although the Nordic countries and autonomous regions at times follow different paths and approaches in carrying out their gender equality policies, most of the time they have common gender equality visions and objectives.

By the end of 2009 the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality homepage will reflect the council's core objectives, including all activities pertaining to gender equality in and outside of the Nordic countries. The content of the homepage will be developed, and all relevant documents will be distributed via the homepage to those with an interest in Nordic gender equality work. The primary target group is politicians and officials in and outside of the Nordic countries, who will benefit from knowledge of Nordic co-operation in this area, as well as gender equality organisations, experts and researchers.

If the above efforts are not sufficient to realise and implement the core objectives and develop a profile for a common Nordic gender equality policy, the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality can reprioritise the council's viewpoints and consider new resolutions on how to proceed.

4. Nordic benefit and the Nordic advantage

Nordic gender equality co-operation will underline the role of co-operation in bringing synergy effects for the individual countries and autonomous regions. In accordance with "The Nordic advantage" the co-operation shall bring overall benefit to the Nordic region.

The resolution of the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality regarding up-coming activities shall bring benefits to all Nordic areas and adhere to the following criteria:

- All activities must have positive consequences for gender equality in all of the Nordic countries and autonomous regions.
- All activities must strengthen and further develop a common Nordic approach to gender equality policy.
- All activities must contribute to increasing common Nordic knowledge and competence and be a relevant part of realising the Nordic policy on globalisation.

The requirement of Nordic benefits and the Nordic advantage does not mean that Nordic gender equality co-operation should lead to each country and autonomous region having the same gender equality policy. Political prioritisations and decisions must safeguard and develop our democratic societies, and result in the increased participation of individuals in all of society's decision-making processes.