



**Shadow report  
by women's organisations in Norway  
to Norway's 7th periodic report  
on the implementation of CEDAW**



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Norwegian women's organisations<sup>1</sup> will in this Shadow report present some of the challenges relating to the promotion of women's rights and gender equality in the country. The report has been drawn up with inputs from several organisations focusing on themes they consider to be important in relation to Norway's 7<sup>th</sup> report on the implementation of CEDAW.

The organisations wish to use this opportunity to call upon the Norwegian Government to be in the forefront, possibly in cooperation with other Nordic Governments, in the efforts to reform the United Nations system and strengthen women's rights internationally.

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## Introduction

In this report, themes which are currently at the top of the agenda in Norwegian women's organisations' efforts to strengthen the position of women, have been selected and presented in relation to the official Norwegian CEDAW report. Consequently, not all items in the CEDAW are included.

In the annual reports on Human Development published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Norway often figures at the top of the list ranking the world's countries with regards to gender-related development (the last time in 2004). The Norwegian Government refers to this as evidence of the success of the Government's policies and actions related to gender equality. Norwegian women's organisation would like to note, however, that the UNDP gender-related development index is not a measure of gender equality. It is a measure of human development adjusted according to gender disparities in life expectancy, education and income. Studying the gender-related development index it becomes clear that it reflects resources more than justice. All the countries at the top of the list are wealthy. Norway is number one with regards to general human development as well as gender-related development. The high ranking is due to the fact that Norwegian women and men generally have longer and healthier lives, more knowledge and a more decent standard of living than people in other countries. And gender disparities are not substantially greater in Norway than in other countries with a similar level of human development.

Norway can be proud of the role women play in politics. In 2007, nearly half of the cabinet ministers are women and more than a third of the Members of Parliament. Four of the eight party leaders are female. But women are not in the majority and women's concerns do not always meet with approval. In 2003, the Parliament adopted a gender quota of 40 per cent in the boards of private companies, a decision that was very much appreciated. And the representation of women has increased, but in 2007 it still only amounts to 25 per cent. In public companies, however, around 40 per cent of board members are women. Generally, the male dominance in Norwegian power elites is overwhelming. An analysis of the elites in 2000-2001 (Hege Skjeie and Mari Teigen, 2003) showed a total of 84 per cent men and 16 per cent women. The representation of men was 100 per cent in defence, 96 per cent in business, 94 per cent in the Church, 93 per cent in law enforcement, 84 per cent in the media, 81 per cent in public administration, 80 per cent in research and higher education, 76 per cent in organisations and 70 per cent in culture.

Women's participation in the workforce has increased notably during the last decades. About two thirds of the women had paid employment in 2005 compared with three fourths of the men. However, while nine out of ten men work full time, this is the case for only a bit more than half of the women. Though the maternity leave and the coverage of day care centres have increased and fathers have acquired the right to leave, women still carry the main responsibility for the care of children and other unpaid services in the home and family. And they pay a price for this socially beneficial work in the form of reduced income, working opportunities and pension rights. Equal pay has not yet been achieved and women generally work in professions with lower wage levels than men. Particularly immigrant women are often in a weak position. Thus women generally earn much less than men. It is estimated (Hilde Bojer, 2006) that the total brute income of women in 2002 on the average amounted to only 60 per cent to that of men.

In addition, there are great challenges related to gender roles, violence and abuse of women.

In spite of the efforts made and progress achieved, Norwegian women's organisations are of the view that considerable efforts are still needed to achieve gender equality in our society. A number of

structural, attitudinal and practical obstacles still persist. Women's organisations are concerned among others about the following:

- the depolitization of "gender" in various contexts and rhetoric support of "feminism" without maintaining the real content of the concept,
- the ambiguity of the goal of "gender equality" and the tendency to equate it with a mechanical equal treatment of women and men regardless of circumstances,
- the lack of emphasis on women, women's concerns and interests in many cases, concealing the real differences in the status, privileges and power of women and men,
- the integration of women's concerns and gender equality issues into allembicing discrimination agendas, thus removing the specifics of gender discrimination and reducing the focus on gender specific approaches and measures,
- the tendency to promote changes in gender roles by giving men increased rights (for example as fathers) without a corresponding increase of duties and responsibilities, while women's rights (for example as mothers) are reduced and their greater efforts devalued, and
- the tendency to mix racism and discrimination of women, creating particularly degrading situations for women from non-Western countries.

At this point in time, Norwegian women's organisations place particular emphasis on the incorporation of the CEDAW into the Human Rights Act, measures to combat violence against women, trafficking and prostitution, efforts to increase the representation of women in elected bodies (there are local elections in the fall), the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and the strengthening of women's studies and gender research – just to mention some of the topics highlighted in the report.

The Norwegian Government has developed important Plans of Action, in particular, the Plan of Action against violence against women 1999, the Plan of Action Against FGM 2000, the Plan of Action Against Forced Marriages 2001, Plans of Action to Combat Trafficking in Women and Children 2003 and 2006, the Plan of action to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2006, and the Plan of Action for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation in 2007. In addition, Report No. 2003:31 on violence against women was published in 2003. However, many challenges remain, in moving on from rhetoric to realities, from good intentions to implementation. In many cases there is a need for greater competence on gender issues, more effective strategies and increased resource allocations.

The basis for this report is the principle of equal rights and non-discrimination for all women irrespective of social status, ethnic origin and / or sexual orientation - in legislation and in practice, nationally and internationally.

## Summary of recommendations

### *Norwegian women's organisations recommend the following:*

#### Part I Constitutional, legislative and institutional framework

##### Articles 2 - 4

##### a) Incorporation of CEDAW into the Human Rights Act

The Norwegian Government should immediately take steps to incorporate the CEDAW into the Human Rights Act.

##### b) National gender equality machinery

The Centre for Gender Equality should be re-instated as part of the Norwegian gender equality machinery, with the special mandate of improving women's conditions in society.

##### c) Efforts to promote gender equality in public administration

More resources, more gender expertise and more effective tools are required in public administration to bridge the gaps between gender policy statements and results. Greater use should be made of gender-specific measure and management should be held accountable for results achieved with regards to gender equality.

#### Part II. Citizenship and political life

##### Article 5

##### a) Gender roles

Stronger efforts are required on the part of government to combat pornography and the increasing sexualisation of the public space. The educational system should among others provide pupils with tools to be able to analyse and handle the processes.

A more systematic approach and actions are required to deal with the problems related to the intersection of gender and race.

Men should be actively involved in changing gender roles and promoting gender equality, but the way by which they are being involved, should be further examined. Measures must not lead to a weakening of the position of women.

The Government should present a broad report on policies and strategies to strengthen women's status and promote gender equality in Norway, using the Beijing Platform as a basis and ensuring a holistic approach to gender issues.

Though individual men might be discriminated against in specific cases, the overall picture of Norwegian society as one of discrimination against women and this, as well as the fundamental aim of CEDAW, must not be concealed or pushed aside.

##### Article 6

##### a) Violence, trafficking in women and prostitution

A holistic strategy and a nation-wide competence and action centre are required to address gender based violence in all its forms (physical and physiological abuse, forced marriages, sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage and femicide). The purchase of sexual services should be banned by law and the webpage [www.sexhandel.no](http://www.sexhandel.no) closed down.

Programmes are needed to educate young men about gender stereotypes, gender roles, violence against women and prostitution as a means of preventing men from buying sex and becoming perpetrators of sexual violence.

##### Article 7

##### a) Women in elected bodies

The authorities should reconsider the electoral laws and adopt compulsory gender quotas to increase the representation of women to elected political bodies. Research and information activities should be

carried out so that both the political parties and the voters understand how the system works and are able to support women in the most effective way.

#### **b) Women's organisations**

The authorities should give women's organisations working to improve the situation of women, higher status and more support. A report is requested from the Government describing the public funding of NGOs and the nomination of participants in public committees, delegations and expert groups from a gender perspective.

#### **Article 8**

##### **a) Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

The Government should report on measures and results of the Action Plan for Gender Equality in the Foreign Service (2002-2006), provide statistics regarding the representation of women in the delegations to international forums of various kinds and specify the specific organisations and level of posts of Norwegians working for international organisations. An action plan for gender equality in Norway's foreign policy as a whole is needed.

##### **b) Security Council Resolution 1325**

Women should be systematically involved to ensure women's security and increase women's participation in peace processes - inside or outside of the formal forums addressing questions of peace and security. The purpose should be to promote women's roles as agents for peace, not increase uncritically the percentage of women in the military.

### **Part III Education, health and employment**

#### **Article 10**

##### **a) Women in education and research**

The Government should initiate comprehensive research on why men and women make traditional choices in deciding on their education and careers.

Gender equality concerns should be taken into account in the determination of research priorities, design and execution and the Government should follow up in an active manner the recommendations made by The Committee for Integration Measures – Women in Research to increase the proportion of women in senior academic posts.

##### **b) Women's studies and gender research**

Women's studies and gender research needs to be strengthened in addition to more focused equality research. An increased focus and more extensive research in the area of equal parenthood are particularly required.

#### **Article 11**

##### **a) Working life**

The segregation between men's and women's work should be reduced. The gap between men's and women's wages must be closed and efforts made to give women the opportunity to work full-time. The situation in the family, not only in the workplace, must be addressed. Students in health and social studies should receive the same financial support as students in technical schools.

##### **b) Day Care Centres**

Greater attention should be given to the quality of services in the day care centres and research should be conducted comparing private and public day care centres. Cash benefits to parents who do not use day care centres for children under 3 years of age, should be discontinued, due to the negative side effects.

### **Part IV Civil matters and marriage**

#### **Article 16**

##### **a) Forced marriages**

The subject of violence against women, including forced marriages, should be incorporated as a compulsory part of the curriculum in compulsory school, police education, teacher training, health

education and training of groups working with violence against women and girls. Additional measures are needed to support potential victims: information about where to get help, competent conflict councils and appropriate public services.

#### **Part V The CEDAW**

##### **Articles 17 – 30**

##### **a) Optional protocol**

The Government should present a report on how they intend to inform the public about the optional protocol, and how they see women's organisations as important partners for change on this area.

## Part I Constitutional, legislative and institutional framework

### Articles 2 - 4

#### a) Incorporation of CEDAW into the Human Rights Act

The laws that so far have been passed by the Norwegian Parliament to transform international principles into national law, form a three tiered hierarchy that is hard to reconcile with the idea of human rights as an indivisible whole:

- Four human rights conventions have been incorporated into the Human Rights Act and given precedence in case of conflict with Norwegian law.
- Two conventions, CEDAW (on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) and CERD (on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination), have been incorporated in the Gender Equality Act and the Discrimination Act without ensuring that they are given precedence in the case of conflict with Norwegian law.
- A series of conventions have been ratified, but not incorporated into Norwegian law

The former government (Bondevik II) did not follow the CEDAW committee's recommendation to incorporate the CEDAW into the Human Rights Act so as to put it on an equal footing with other human rights instruments. In 2005 the CEDAW was incorporated into the Gender Equality Act and the CERD into the new Discrimination Act – without any provisions ensuring that these Conventions would prevail over any conflicting Norwegian statutes. The opposition, including the Labour Party, the Socialist Left Party and the Centre Party, voted in favour of incorporating CEDAW and CERD into the Human Rights Act so as to ensure that they would prevail in case of conflict with Norwegian Law.

When the Labour Party, the Socialist Left Party and Centre Party took over power in autumn 2005, they pledged in their Government Declaration (the Soria Moria Declaration) to “incorporate the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women into the Human Rights Act.”

However, the Minister of Justice stated in an interview with the newspaper Dagbladet in March 2007 that the Norwegian Government feels free to choose how it wants to incorporate CEDAW, regardless of the view of the CEDAW committee. Rather than following the recommendation of the CEDAW committee and follow up on its own political promise in the Soria Moria Declaration, the Government will follow the advice of the Norwegian Ministry of Justice, that it is necessary to look deeper into the question of making instruments like the CEDAW and CERD directly applicable in Norwegian law.

How CEDAW should be incorporated into Norwegian law, has now been debated for 15 years. As of today, there is broad consensus among NGO's, women's organisations, human rights organisations and human rights experts that the CEDAW and CERD should be incorporated into the Human Rights Act. When the Bondevik II Government circulated a proposal regarding incorporation of the CEDAW for broad general consultative comment in 2003, the consultative bodies almost unanimously expressed the view that the Convention had to be incorporated into the Human Rights Act and be given precedence as the other major conventions. Only the legal section within the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General were against.

At the Faculty of Law at the University of Oslo, the Institute of Women's Law, the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, professors in child law, labour law and constitutional law have all expressed clear opinions on the matter.

The present situation is giving rise to a wide range of legal controversies as to the status of CEDAW in Norwegian law, which in turn is having an adverse effect on the interpretation of the Gender Equality Act and the use of the CEDAW in Norwegian Courts. The hierarchic ranking of human rights instruments is also having a negative effect on the authority and status of the Discrimination and Equality Ombud and the efforts to promote gender equality, as equality considerations have to yield to other laws.

Norwegian women's organisations would like to add that the credibility of Norway's efforts to support the United Nations and promote gender equality in other countries is negatively affected by the fact that the Norwegian government itself has not followed up the request from the CEDAW committee to incorporate the CEDAW into the Human Rights Act.

#### **b) National gender equality machinery**

As part of the reorganization of the national gender equality machinery, the Centre for Gender Equality was closed down from 1.1.2006. And a new organ called the Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud has been established. It is important to emphasize that women's organizations strongly regret this move, and we have made this clear to the Government.

The earlier Centre for Gender Equality played an important role in developing and influencing Norwegian policy-making, keeping gender equality clearly in focus. The Centre's independent role – given to the Centre by the Parliament – allowed the Centre for Gender Equality to be a reprimanding and correcting mechanism of the Government's priorities and policies. This meant that the Centre could have a real watchdog-function. The new Anti-Discrimination Ombud has difficulties playing the same role, due to its broad mandate and function in relation to the Gender Equality Act. In addition, the Centre for Gender Equality was a meeting place for women's organizations, and had a well developed cooperation with them. The Centre played an important liaison role between the women's organisations and the government / ministries. The Centre often worked in collaboration with women's organisations in promoting women's rights.

As women's organisations it is our view that the focus on the discrimination of women and on women's rights has significantly decreased since this re-organisation.

The three political parties that form the present coalition government and are currently in the majority in Parliament, did not support the closing down of the Centre for Gender Equality. We urge the Government to evaluate the existing machinery as soon as possible and consider re-instating a Centre for Gender Equality as part of the Norwegian gender equality machinery, with the special mandate, as with the earlier Centre, to improve women's conditions in society.

#### **c) Efforts to promote gender equality in public administration**

##### **Gender mainstreaming**

The Norwegian Government has adopted gender mainstreaming as its overall strategy for achieving gender equality, but gender specific action is also accepted if it promotes equality. This dual approach was established at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. The gender mainstreaming strategy calls for the integration of gender perspectives into all stages of policy-making processes - design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation - to promote equality between women and men. The strategy recognises gender as a cross-cutting issue which has relevance in most areas of society.

This strategy has brought some results, but the overall impression is that it has not been followed up according to the intentions. The focus specifically on the status of women has been weakened and the idea has become widespread that gender neutrality promotes equality. In fact, gender neutrality - intentionally or unintentionally - generates inequality, because men and women often have different points of departure and the norms for policy development and implementation have traditionally been based on the status and roles of men. To be aware of gender perspectives and take gender differences into account in policy processes is a necessary precondition for the gender mainstreaming strategy to work effectively.

Two basic tools have been established to achieve this in the central administration:

- Integration of gender equality and gender perspectives into the state budget (gender budgeting).
- Utilization of gender equality assessments, when relevant, in the formulation of new policies or reformulation of existing policies (compulsory gender equality assessments).

None of these tools are used to their full potential. The process of gender budgeting has so far, with respect to most of the ministries, mainly focused on the internal status of gender equality, for example the gender distribution with regard to leadership positions. The Ministry of Children and Equality has taken steps to obtain information on how funds are distributed to men and women respectively and on policy outcomes. But many ministries are hesitant to follow up in a proper manner. An exception is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which has commented on gender in a number of areas in the budget proposal. Further, gender equality assessments in policy development processes are rarely used to prevent policies that might have a negative impact on gender equality. Many proposals do not adequately address the question of gender equality in the early stages of the processes.

Norwegian women's organisations underline the need for more resources, more gender expertise and more effective tools in public administration, to bridge the gaps between gender policy statements and results. In many areas, gender-specific measures are necessary to promote gender equality. Without resources for obtaining knowledge, developing tools and for ensuring their implementation, the strategy of mainstreaming will remain inadequate. There is generally a lack of understanding and competence on gender issues. Further, the status of the gender experts within the administration is low, and tools designed to make gender perspectives visible and relevant are rare. More gender knowledge needs to be developed in interaction with gender expertise inside and outside of the administration (in NGOs, research milieus, the national apparatus for gender equality and other relevant actors). And more resources need to be allocated for studies clarifying the effects of the various measures. It is important that management be held accountable for results with regards to gender equality. The assessment of the gender implications of policy reforms should be followed up actively at an early stage by an independent public body with gender expertise.

Gender budgeting and the assessment of gender implications of policies and actions should be made compulsory also in the municipal and county administrations. Today, the promotion of gender equality largely depends on the engagement and determination of individuals in top political and administrative positions. Leaders in management positions ought to be evaluated according to the progress they achieve with regard to gender equality, in order to make them more accountable for the policies and actions they pursue.

## Part II. Citizenship and political life

### Article 5

#### a) Gender roles

##### **Actions to combat gender stereotypes**

Norwegian women's organisations are of the view that the efforts of the Government to combat gender stereotypes in the public arena are far too weak. Norway has a law against gender discriminatory advertisement. Stronger measures are needed to make the law more effective.

In the official report to CEDAW from the Norwegian Government, pornography and the sexualisation of the public space are mentioned, but in a way that is far too vague. We know that women and children are harmed by pornography, both the "actors" and the viewers. Women and women's bodies are objectified and in many cases brutalised in pornography. Pornography also creates a demand for prostitution and for the trafficking of women and young people for sexual exploitation.

Sexual stereotyping gives reason for concern – particularly as it appears in pornography on the Internet and in the mass media - due to the harm it can cause to women and men, boys and girls. Health institutions report for example of teenage girls asking for medical help concerning pain and problems in the anus. They report that they have been having anal sex with their boyfriends, consenting to being penetrated in the anus because they believe that they have to. They see this being done in pornographic films, and think that they have to follow these pornographic sexual stereotypes.

The Norwegian education system does not give the pupils tools to be able to analyse and handle the processes of pornographication and sexualisation of our society. International reports describe the serious negative health effects of these processes on both girls and boys. Yet, the adult community does not take responsibility for combating the sexualisation of women's and girls' bodies (and increasingly also boys' bodies). There is a tendency in society of accepting the harmful practice of undressing women, presenting them more or less naked in public - making women think that their sexuality is their main source of acceptance and appreciation. The authorities do not take measures to analyse the link between pornography and other harmful and unlawful practices such as rape, trafficking of women and girls for the purpose of prostitution, and other sexualised forms of violence.

It is a paradox, in this context, that the Norwegian Government and the media are very preoccupied and concerned by practices relating to the "on-dressing", the covering of the body, of women with non-western background (by using head scarves).

The discrimination of black women, due to post-colonial sex stereotyping, and the increasing abuse of black and immigrant women are not addressed in a proper manner. In this context, we call for a more systematic approach and actions dealing with the problems related to the intersection of gender and race.

##### **Men, gender roles and gender equality**

Norwegian women's organisations recognise the importance of involving men in the efforts to achieve gender equality. Men have the potential of being effective agents for change, as they hold the majority of key political, economic and other decision-making positions. Men can therefore be important agents contributing to a more just situation for women in many areas.

However, women's organisations are sceptical to the way by which men actually are being involved in the promotion of gender equality. Without the clear aim of especially improving the situation of women - which is also stated in the Act for Gender Equality -, measures taken to promote gender equality can in reality lead to a backlash, weakening the position of women. Despite reports and guidelines on how to engage men in the work for gender equality from UN agencies and the EU, the central public administration in Norway has not yet developed a strategy on how to involve men. Research has revealed that men in fact are being given increased rights as fathers without a corresponding increase of duties and responsibilities, while women's rights as mothers are being reduced and their greater efforts devalued.

Norwegian women's organisations welcome a focus on how to bring more knowledge to men, including on the hierarchies of masculinities among men. This gives important information on how to promote good gender equal roles for men that are also women friendly.

However, women's organisations are concerned with the limited focus of the Government Report to the Parliament on men (*Mannsmeldingen*), lacking important aspects. We request that an expanded report be elaborated, providing a broad description and analysis of policies and strategies to strengthen women's status and promote gender equality in Norway. This will ensure a holistic approach to gender issues, including both men's and women's roles and situation. The last time there was such a broad report was in 1991-92 (Report to the Parliament on gender equality) outlining the policies to promote gender equality in the 1990's. Since then there has been no overview of the Government's efforts in this area and no evaluation of progress achieved and obstacles encountered presented to the Parliament and the Norwegian public for broad debate. It is therefore high time to take stock - not only in exclusive periodic reports to the CEDAW committee in English for the particularly interested, but for the general Norwegian public. The Beijing platform was not presented to the Parliament and has in its totality not been translated into Norwegian or given widespread distribution as a basis for our national efforts.

In the periodic report, the Government expresses great concerns about men, stating that "*Men are discriminated against as well*". Therefore "*It will be necessary to implement measures that especially target men. It is important to avoid placing men and women in categories. ...*".

Women's organisations want to stress that though individual men might be discriminated against in specific cases, the overall picture of the Norwegian society is one of discrimination against women. The CEDAW is the UN Convention against the discrimination of women, adopted because men and women actually are placed in different categories all over the world, women generally having lower status and power and less access to resources than men. There should be no confusion about this basic fact and the fundamental aim of CEDAW.

## Article 6

### a) Violence, trafficking in women and prostitution

Violence against women is often an indicator of how far the efforts towards achieving gender equality have progressed in a given society. The fact that about 30 per cent of the women staying at shelters for battered women are on welfare or are unemployed, is an indication that there is a link between women's access to an independent income and their vulnerability to violence and abuse (report from the Shelter Secretariat, 2005). Women's vulnerability to, and fear of gendered violence, remain obstacles to the equal participation of women in Norwegian society.

Although a number of initiatives and important steps have been taken to empower women and achieve gender equality in Norway, there is still no holistic strategy in this area. The Norwegian Government's own goals have not been achieved. Much is still left to be done in terms of prevention and protection of victims and reactions against perpetrators.

### Gender based violence

Violence against women in intimate relationships constitutes a serious societal problem in Norway. This violence has a clear gender bias, in that the victims are mainly women and the perpetrators of the violence are mainly men. The aspect of power is central to understanding the mechanisms embedded in this type of violence. The violence has serious negative consequences, not only for the victims, but for society in general. Therefore, combating violence against women must be a matter of public concern, not a private issue. But services and legal measures are still inadequate and they lack co-ordination.

Men are responsible for most of the violence that women experience, and must therefore be engaged in changing roles and providing positive models for young men. Women's organisations in Norway would like to point out that there is a lack of government funding for young men's groups that want to educate young men and boys in sexual behaviour, and young women's groups teaching girls how to draw limits against unwanted sexual attention.

In addition, men in general must be educated and get help to handle problems that could generate gender based violence.

Norway still lacks a nation-wide competence and action centre that addresses gender based violence in all its forms (physical and physiological abuse, forced marriages, sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage and femicide).

Norway tops the statistics in Europe of men murdering women they know. Homicide statistics for women and children reveal deaths that are caused by violence. Statistics for the period 1994-2003 show that nearly half of the women who were murdered, were killed by current or former cohabiting partners. Experience from the shelters and health services indicates that not much is being done to investigate the connection between deaths among women and previous histories of abuse.

Norwegian women's organisations urge the Government to take women's right to freedom from violence very seriously and include securing women's freedom as a top priority issue.

### Trafficking and prostitution

Norway is mainly a receiving country for women in prostitution from Asia, Africa, South America and Eastern Europe. Even Norwegian women engage in prostitution, but the number of foreign women in prostitution is increasing rapidly and has become a public concern.

Reports show that 80 per cent of the women in prostitution in Norway are from abroad and they come from nearly 60 different nations. From Nigeria there are about 600. The second largest group is from Eastern Europe and the Baltic states. It is estimated that there are between 2000 and 3000 women in prostitution in Oslo only. Most of the women from Africa and many from Eastern Europe are victims of trafficking.

An increasing share of the prostitution appears to be part of organised international crime. Some of the foreign women arrive in Norway on tourist visas, some are invited by Norwegian men, and some have been married to Norwegian men.

About 13 per cent of Norwegian men have bought sex once or several times. That is about 100 000 men.

In 2003 and 2006 the Government introduced plans of action against trafficking in women and children. So far, women's organisations have not seen any reporting on how Norway follows up on the responsibility to provide safe returns for women trafficked to Norway. Women's organisations are of the view that the issue of safe returns is not pursued by the Norwegian authorities according to their obligations in Article 8 in The UN Palermo-protocol (The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in persons, especially women and children).

One measure in the plan of action is to help victims of trafficking to safe return and re-establishment in their home-countries. A new paper from Anette Brukovski (2007) notes that many victims of trafficking to Norway feel that they have been duped into going back to their home countries. For many different reasons, the women cannot make use of the assistance available. Many measures are actually not appropriate for the women concerned.

Women's organisations emphasise that help must be given according to article 6 in the Palermo-protocol and in cooperation with the woman herself. We also are of the view that women in prostitution ought to be helped out of this activity, regardless of whether they are victims of trafficking or not.

The Norwegian Rosa Help Project was in contact with 82 women in 2006. 60 of them got a place to live, most of them in crisis centres.

The Rosa Help Project states that most of the women who break out from trafficking, seek asylum. Only 9 of the 60 have got permanent permission to stay in Norway. Women's organisations wish to remind the Norwegian Government of Article 7 in the Palermo-protocol, where the state parties shall take into consideration the possibility for victims to stay in the country when needed, and that compensation shall be considered. Compensation for the damage caused by the traffickers and the customers, should be paid by them. A real compensation would make it easier for the women to return to their home-countries.

Much is still left unfinished in the implementation of the CEDAW and the Palermo Protocol, for example in terms of measures for reducing demand, see article 9 in the Palermo Protocol. The Palermo Protocol calls upon countries to reduce the demand, either through legislation or through education and campaigns to change attitudes.

Sweden has introduced a legal ban on the purchase of sexual services. As of this spring, 2007, the three parties in the Norwegian Government have all voted for a new act, criminalising the buyer of sex, at their respective party assemblies. Many of the women's organisations are eager to see such a law be put in place, hoping the Government will follow the Swedish model as a way of combating trafficking and prostitution.

Women's organisations are glad to note that the Minister of Justice is working on a law that will prohibit purchase of sex, and the Minister has promised that the law will be set in force within a year from now.

Awaiting the law, we acknowledge that the Norwegian Government maintains that the demand for prostitution needs to be addressed, but note that measures in order to prevent men from purchasing sexual services are still inadequate.

Several women's organisations have on different occasions tried to get the central public administration interested in a program from the Philippines, educating young men in gender stereotypes, gender roles, violence against women and prostitution. Women's organisations believe that this is an effective and important measure preventing men from buying sex and reducing the risk of their being perpetrators of sexual violence.

Currently, the Norwegian Government finances a web site for sex buyers ([ww.sexhandel.no](http://ww.sexhandel.no)), with the aim of preventing them from buying sex. Women's organisations are sceptical to such a measure. Among others it is uncertain whether the use of pictures on the website and the dialogue forum prevent or foster the buying of sex. We recommend a closure of the page until the prevention effect has been documented. If not, the Norwegian Government risks being a facilitator for prostitution and trafficking.

Women's organisations are pleased with the Minister of Trade and Industry, who in the Norwegian Ownership report (*Eierskapsmeldingen*) 2006, has introduced a code of conduct prohibiting the buying of sex by all employees in companies owned by the state. Women's organisations see this as a good sign – that the Government considers the buyers of prostituted sex responsible, and that it will be illegal to take advantage of women and girls living in poverty.

## Article 7

### a) Women in elected bodies

Even though Norway has achieved relatively high proportions of women in political bodies compared to many other countries, there has been almost no increase of women's representation during the last 15 years and women remain clearly underrepresented in almost every area.

90 years after women acquired the right to vote only a little more than one third of the members of Parliament and municipal councils are women. During the municipal elections in 2003, the representation of women only increased by 1, 4 per cent, amounting to a total of 35, 5 per cent, and during the parliamentary elections in 2005, the representation only increased by 1, 5 per cent giving a total representation of 37, 9 percent.

At the last municipal elections 40 per cent of the totally nominated candidates were women. This was due to the fact that five parties nominated 40 per cent or more women. Three parties nominated less, one not more than 27 per cent. With regard to the representation of women in elected bodies, Norway only has voluntary gender quotas in the political parties. Five parties have introduced such quotas, while the others have not. To ensure a just representation of women in political decision-making, Norwegian women's organisations are of the view that gender quotas ought to be compulsory, so that all parties nominate an equal number of women and men onto the electoral lists. Some parties say this is difficult, as many women refuse to stand for election. But the fact that one party has more than 50 per cent women among its representatives in the municipal councils and another among its members of Parliament proves that it is possible to obtain a balanced gender representation if there is sufficient political will to do so. Compulsory quotas will put pressure on the parties so that they will do more to encourage women to participate in politics and stand for election, and take more active measures to facilitate their representation.

During recent decades the electoral laws have been changed several times and the revisions have partly had the effect of making it more difficult for women to be elected. Norwegian women's organisations therefore request that the authorities should reconsider the laws to facilitate the access of women to elected political bodies. In addition, the authorities ought to organise and support research

and information activities of various kinds so that both the political parties and the voters understand how the adopted laws function and are able to support women candidates in the most effective way within the existing framework.

#### b) Women's organisations

Norwegian women's organisations are concerned that the Government does not report on its support to NGO's in general and women's organisations in particular. In our view women's organisations are not given the status and support that should be expected in light of the central role they play to improve the situation of women. Women's organisations in Norway are profoundly under funded, receiving far less support from the public authorities than other groups in civil society. The funding accessible for the work of promoting women's rights at a national level seems to have decreased during recent years. Women's organisations are also disturbed by the lack of representation in public committees, delegations and expert groups.

Norwegian women's organisations request a report from the Government describing the public funding of NGOs and analysing the nomination of participants in public committees, delegations and expert groups from a gender perspective.

### Article 8

#### a) Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has placed increased emphasis on gender equality after the change of government in 2005 – gender equality is one of five priority themes in Norway's development cooperation.

The Ministry launched an Action Plan for Gender Equality in the Foreign Service (2002-2006). Norwegian women's organisations request a report on planned and implemented measures from the Action Plan, as well as the results. Some rough statistics are provided with regard to employment, but there should also be information about the level of posts of women and men and their areas of work. Statistics should further be provided regarding the representation of women in the delegations to international forums of various kinds. This is information that must be available in the Ministry's files. Regarding Norwegians working for international organisations, information should include the specific organisations and level of posts.

In the top management of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs there are 30 per cent women in 2007, which is more than before, though the target of 35 per cent in 2006 was not achieved. Among the ambassadors, the share of women is 15 per cent, while the target for 2006 was 25 per cent. It is therefore evident that increased efforts are necessary to promote equality in practice in the Ministry.

In Norway's general foreign policy the Government focuses on gender issues particularly related to security in West-Balkan and Russia, SR1325, migration and trafficking. But there is no action plan addressing Norway's foreign policy as a whole.

In 2006, the Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg co-chaired a panel on UN reform dealing with development, environment and humanitarian assistance, which proposed the establishment of a new, independent UN organisation for women. Norwegian women's organisations are very appreciative of this initiative and request that the Norwegian and other Governments ensure its proper implementation.

## b) Security Council Resolution 1325

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been increasingly engaged in implementing resolution 1325. Women's organisations welcome this commitment. Norwegian researchers and NGOs have for a long time been working for the effective implementation of the resolution – both nationally and internationally. Forum Norway 1325 – a group of active organisations and individuals - was established in 2004 in order to promote 1325-initiatives and solutions based on their competence and experiences. Among others Forum Norway 1325 pushed for a national Plan of action. In March 2006 the Government launched such a plan. The action plan marks the beginning of a process, and will be revised regularly. Regarding this process, Norwegian women's organisations find it appropriate to raise some serious concerns requiring immediate responses from the Government.

The aim of the resolution is to increase women's participation in civil and military peace operations, peacemaking and peace building and to enhance the protection of women's human rights in conflict areas. In our view the only effective instrument for enhancing women's security and increase women's participation in peace processes is to systematically involve women - inside or outside of the formal forums addressing questions of peace and security. Women are the main source for information on how to increase their security and on the barriers for their participation.

The lack of mechanisms for ensuring consultation with women and women's organisations in the general activities in Norwegian foreign peace policies is contradictory to the intentions of the resolution. Instead women's issues are addressed in ad hoc processes. This strategy might provide some important results, but the ad hoc approach alone is inadequate in a long term perspective for building sustainable peace. Women's organisations in Norway are more than willing to cooperate with the Norwegian Government on how to integrate resolution 1325 into mainstream foreign policies. More recommendations concerning the involvement of women's organisations are to be found in the FOKUS (Forum for Women and Development) report *Roadmap to the Norwegian Implementation of Resolution 1325 – Involve the women's organizations!*

Another issue of concern is the lack of women in Norwegian delegations dealing with disarmament, and in other international forums concerning peace and security. In our view it is quite a paradox that the central government administration secures a representation of at least 40 per cent men in official delegations concerning women's issues, such as processes related to the CSW and CEDAW, but does not apply the rule with regard to the representation of women in traditionally "male areas". This is contrary to the provisions in Resolution 1325.

Several women's organisations have protested against the efforts of the Government to increase the participation of women in the military in general and possibly introduce compulsory military service for women with reference to gender equality and resolution 1325. They hold the view that the resolution should not be interpreted in such a way that it becomes a tool to justify the recruitment of more female soldiers into peace operations. The purpose of 1325 is to promote women's roles as agents for peace, not to increase uncritically the percentage of women in the military. Introducing compulsory military service for women might in theory appear to be a step towards greater gender equality, but in practice the effects could turn out to be the opposite, placing more burdens on women who already carry a disproportionate share in relation to men.

### c) Development cooperation

An independent evaluation of Norwegian bilateral aid to developing countries in 2005 showed that the aim of integrating women's and gender equality perspectives in the international development cooperation as a whole during the period 1997-2005 was not achieved in spite of policies and strategies to this effect. The total assistance related to women and gender equality had increased, but remained relatively small and fragmented. On this basis, the Government elaborated a new "Action Plan for women's rights and gender equality in development cooperation" for the period 2007-2009 and introduced a special women's allocation of 200 million NOK in the aid budget for 2007. The action plan focuses particularly on the following areas: women's political and economic participation, violence against women, sexual and reproductive health and rights. There are special plans of action related to female genital mutilation, trafficking and SR resolution 1325. In addition, a gender perspective shall be integrated in all areas, including peace-building, human rights and humanitarian assistance, good governance and institution-building, environment and sustainable development, oil and energy, education and health.

The Action Plan will require not only increased resources targeting women and women's needs, but also adequate institutional mechanisms, including sufficiently resourced gender units in the Ministry and NORAD, and improved competence in general among staff with regard to women and gender issues. Women's organisations expect the Ministry to implement these requirements in a satisfactory manner.

## Part III Education, health and employment

### Article 10

#### a) Women in education and research

Norway's seventh periodic report points to the fact that men and women make traditional choices deciding on their education and careers. However, no recent comprehensive research has been carried out on the reasons for this. Norwegian women's organisations find this regrettable and urge the Government to initiate such research. The choice of education, with men dominating in technical and science subjects, and women in teacher training, education, health and social subjects, largely determines the gender distribution in the labour market, which is clearly segregated by gender.

Regarding gender equality in research, the report focuses on the under-representation of women in academic posts and the skewed distribution in different subjects and sectors. But the choice of areas for research and the implementation of research programmes and projects of different kinds are not discussed through a gender lens. Are gender equality concerns taken into account in the determination of research priorities, and are gender equality perspectives included in research design and execution? Questions such as these are extremely important, but are not addressed in the periodic report.

The Government places great emphasis on the development of natural science research, focusing specifically on areas such as energy and the environment, maritime issues and nutrition. Many of the scientists will be recruited from mathematics, science and technology faculties, where the number of women is extremely low. At the same time, research in the areas of social science, education and medicine, where the number of women is high, is given limited priority. Experiences from Sweden indicate that an effective strategy to promote gender equality is to increase resources in areas where women are in the majority, thus creating more opportunities for women to obtain funding for their research and acquire academic positions.

The periodic report describes the Government's strategy to increase the proportion of women in senior academic posts. The Committee for Integration Measures – Women in Research, referred to in the periodic report, has now presented its recommendations, urging the Government to increase these efforts, among others using specific targeted measures, to strengthen the status of women. Norwegian women's organisations request the Government to follow up these recommendations in an active manner. It is unacceptable that increasing numbers of women in universities and colleges are obliged to note that more and more doors are being closed, the higher up in the system they come. An equitable presence of women in the highest ranks of academic institutions is not only a question of basic justice, but also of the rational use of resources and the quality of research. Today the resources represented by women are under-utilized and the quality of research weakened due to the fact that only the perspectives and interests of one gender are given priority. Excellence and relevance in research require scientists that are able to ask a wide range of questions and consider many different solutions. This is best achieved in milieus characterized by diversity and varied experiences, with a broad representation of both women and men at all levels.

#### b) Women's studies and gender research

It is stated in Norway's seventh periodic report that there is extensive research on women's and gender issues. It is true that the Government increased the funds for the promotion of gender equality in 2007 in relation to previous years. This is positive, but the total amount still remains extremely modest. To make real progress, far greater efforts are required.

To promote equality in an effective manner, policies and measures must be based on knowledge and competence. In spite of the public support of research programmes and projects, there are important lacunas. In relation to the need and the number of applications worthy of support, the volume of women's studies and gender research is very limited indeed. And there is no systematic research to evaluate the effects of the public equality policy, of the various strategies such as equal treatment, special measures, quotas and mainstreaming, and of the new Equality and Anti-Discrimination apparatus. Therefore the basis for a targeted, dynamic and effective promotion of equality is missing to a large extent. Norwegian women's organisations are of the view that a general strengthening of women's studies and gender research is necessary in addition to more focused equality research.

Changes in the roles of men inevitably entail changes in the roles of women, particularly with regard to family and child care. Norwegian women's organisations request the government to have an increased focus on and do more extensive research in the area of equal parenthood. More knowledge is needed with regard to the emotional as well as practical, economic and legal consequences of the changes taking place toward more equal parental roles for women and men. Questions requiring greater insight include among others: How do modern mothers experience situations with more equal fathers? What impact does the situation have on the children and the satisfaction of their needs? What qualifications do parents of today have for more equal parenthood? Are there conflicts of interest between mothers and fathers or between children and parents?

## Article 11

### a) Working life

In 2006, 66 per cent of the women, and 74 per cent of the men were in paid employment. 43 per cent of the women in paid jobs worked only part time, while not more than 12 per cent of the men did this. As for parents with small children, the mothers spent half as much time on paid work as the fathers. A new report from the Institute of Social Research (*Institutt for samfunnsforskning*) states that a woman loses in salary scale for every child she gets, but for the father, the situation is quite the opposite. There is a contradiction in what is best for the family as a whole, and what is best for women as individuals.

In Norway, women earn 85 per cent of the amount earned by men when both work full time. The wage gap has not been reduced during the last 20 years. Women's organisations agree that most of the gap between men and women's pay can be explained by the fact that women and men have different occupations and work in gender-segregated sectors. The male-dominated sectors pay higher wages than the female-dominated sectors. Part time work also contributes to the difference in wages between men and women.

Women's organisations expect the Equal Pay Commission (*Likeslønnskommisjonen*) to give concrete advice on how to close the gap between men's and women's wages. Women's work must be valued as being as important as men's work. The difference between female- and male-dominated sectors is a national problem, and should be solved by the national authorities, not be left to the market.

Efforts must also be made to give women the opportunity to work full-time. Women take much more responsibility for domestic work than men, and this is often the reason why they work part time in the labour market. To be able to close the wage gap, the situation within the family must be addressed, not only in the work place, since inequality between men and women often starts within the family.

Strong efforts should also be made to reduce the segregation between women's and men's work, which already starts when young men and women decide upon their education. Within the area of social and health education, as much as 90 per cent of the students are girls, while within technical educations, 95 per cent of the students are boys.

In this case, the new law for vocational colleges (*Fagskoler*) is a step in the wrong direction, allowing discrimination between the students in the two different kinds of education. According to the Law, the students in technical schools will have their education financed by the state, while the students in health and social studies will have to pay for the education themselves. This is all the more regrettable as the need for increased labour in the areas of health and social services is very great (*Aftenposten, June 12 2007*)

## b) Day Care Centres

Norwegian women's organisations appreciate the strong emphasis of the present government on full day care coverage and the efforts to achieve this goal. This service has been expanded in a notable way during recent years. But three aspects of the present policies and measures may give reason for concern: privatization of the sector, the lack of qualified personnel and the system of cash benefits for the youngest children.

As the sector has expanded during recent years, the percentage of private day care centres has increased significantly. It is a problem that day care in fact has become a form of private business yielding a profit, while little attention has been paid to the quality of the services and little research has been done comparing the private to the public day care centres.

Most personnel working in day care centres are women. Only about 30 per cent are well qualified, with an education as preschool teachers corresponding to three or more years of University College. This is the lowest percentage of qualified personnel in day care centres in Scandinavia. The "good day care centre project" (*den gode barnehage*) confirms that the quality of day care would improve if the percentage of educated staff was increased. However, this has not been the government's goal. Instead it has given priority to the goal of increasing the share of male staff up to 20 per cent, which is in itself commendable, but unfortunately the policy has been pursued without regard to the level of education, thus weakening this aspect of the day care centre services.

From a perspective of gender equality, it is also problematic that the government provides cash benefits to parents who do not use day care centres for children under 3 years of age. This creates a demand for "nannies" on the black market. And in some cases it can lead to the exploitation of young girls from economically poor countries. Besides, the arrangement seems to indicate that the day care centres are not good enough for these children, regardless of the actual quality of services. In practice, the benefits also function as a disincentive with regard to women's employment and weaken the social integration of those children who have a special need to develop their language ability in Norwegian due to their varied ethnic backgrounds. Norwegian women's organisations are therefore of the view that the benefits should be discontinued. Further, the challenges related to the low level of women's income and the need for good child care ought to be addressed in other ways.

## Part IV Civil matters and marriage

### Article 16

#### a) Forced marriages

It is an increasing challenge in Norway that many political proposals with the aim of preventing forced marriages in fact are measures for a stricter immigration policy. Many of the proposals appear to be an expression of structural racism and gender discrimination, giving rise to different rules for different ethnic groups.

Instead of focusing on good and effective practices targeting forced marriages directly, the issues are drawn onto broader immigration debates. This does not benefit the girls and boys at risk, or those who already are in forced marriages and need help to leave.

Norwegian women's organisations demand that the Norwegian Government incorporate the subject of violence against women, including forced marriages, as a compulsory theme in the curriculum in compulsory school, police education, teacher training, health education and training of groups working with violence against women and girls.

Potential victims, teachers and other persons in contact with potential victims must know where to get help in case of suspicion of the practice. For those who need this, conflict councils that are competent to negotiate between parents and children should to be established. Further, there ought to be public services that make a break possible, if necessary, guaranteeing for example housing for victims.

## Part V The CEDAW

### Articles 17 – 30

#### a) Optional protocol

In Norway, many women are unaware of some of their rights under CEDAW and other Human Rights instruments, and have therefore difficulty getting remedies for violations of their rights as described in the conventions.

Norway signed the CEDAW Optional Protocol seven years ago, but still there are few people who are familiar with the protocol. One of the Governments' responsibilities stated by the protocol is to make the protocol known to the public, through information campaigns and added resources. In this manner, the protocol will become accessible for women to submit claims of violations of rights protected under the Convention, to the Committee.

Norwegian women's organisations request that the Government provide a report on how they intend to implement such an information campaign, and how they see women's organisations as important partners for change in this area.





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