



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

Pre-session working group

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**Responses to the list of issues and questions with regard
to the consideration of the seventh periodic report**

Norway*

* The present report is being issued without formal editing.

With reference to your letter of 5 April 2007, The Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality hereby transmit the answers to the list of issues and questions from the pre-session working group examining the seventh periodic report from Norway.

We would like to give honour to the work of the pre-session working group. The list of issues and questions shows a great knowledge in the Norwegian politic on gender equality. We have made an effort to answer all the questions according to your request, however we would kindly like to ask for the possibility to deepen the answers through the examination, and by a follow up answer to questions no 25-26.

Norway is looking forward to the examination of our seventh periodic report and we kindly request the Committee to pose the questions to each article together.

1. *Please provide information if the seventh periodic report was adopted by the Government and if it was presented to the Parliament.*

The Norwegian seventh report has been approved by the Norwegian Minister of Children and Equality; Karita Bekkemellem. Furthermore, the report has been presented in Norway's National Budget for 2007, which is presented to the Storting as Report no. 1 (2006-2007) on 6 October 2006. The National Budget presents the Government's programme for the implementation of economic policy and projections for the Norwegian Economy.

2. *Under article 2a, the report describes the incorporation of the Convention into the Gender Equality Act, as well as the significant discussion surrounding this action. It also notes that the Government Declaration of the current Government included a pledge to incorporate the Convention in the Human Rights Act. Please describe the practical impact so far of the incorporation of the Convention in the Gender Equality Act, and any differences compared to the impact of the incorporation of other human rights instruments in the Human Rights Act. Please describe any further developments, in particular in relation to the pledge of the current Government to incorporate the Convention in the Human Rights Act.*

The Convention was incorporated in to Norwegian law with effect from 1 July 2005. As for yet there has been handled no cases in Norwegian courts based on the claim that there has been a breach of the Convention. In several cases, however, the former Gender Equality Ombud has presented arguments based on the Convention. The process of incorporation probably has increased the awareness and knowledge of the Convention in general, and it might be expected that the convention to a somewhat larger extent will be presented as an argument also in Norwegian courts of law in the future.

As accounted for in the Report, the current Government pledged in their Government Declaration to incorporate the Convention in to the Human Rights Act. This will give the Convention a special strength, as the Human Rights Act has been given precedence over other Norwegian legislation. The Government still has the question under consideration.

3. *According to the Report (under article 2c), as of 1 January 2006, the Gender Equality Act is now enforced by the new Anti-Discrimination and Equality Ombud and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal. Please provide an assessment of the effectiveness of the new machinery with the respect to gender-based discrimination, as compared to previous arrangements that focused on gender equality only, including case load on different grounds of discrimination, as well as awareness-raising activities to promote the implementation of the Convention and the enjoyment by women of their human rights across all fields.*

The new anti-discrimination and equality machinery will be assessed within three years from the establishment, i.e. within the end of 2008. Based on the first annual report from the new Ombud and Tribunal, it can be concluded that the number of inquiries and complaints over gender based discrimination is at the same level as before the establishment of the new machinery. The number of inquiries and complaints based on other grounds, such as ethnicity, religion, disability, age and sexual orientation, is eventually rising as the general knowledge on the prohibition against discrimination is strengthened. Yet the 26 out of 26 complaints handled by the Tribunal in 2006 where cases on gender discrimination.

The new Ombud has continued to pursue important gender equality questions, such as gender based violence and equal pay, but the Ombud also seeks to intercept and identify new problems that need to be addressed, and is especially aware of problems in the intersection of gender/ethnicity and gender/religion.

4. *According to the report (article 2d), only some of the municipal offices reported to the Ministry of Government Administration and Reform on their gender equality work, including on challenges and priorities in this regard. What has been the impact of measures taken in 2006, such as training, to improve the activity and reporting of the county governors' offices?*

All county governor's offices has been invited to and taken part in a training course, supported by the Ministry and led by an specialist organisation established by Nordland county, local municipalities, women's organisations and private individuals.

First, all leaders on different levels from every county was gathered, and later in 2006, a course took place in every office, both for leaders and other employees.

5. *According to the report (article 6) the number of formal reports of domestic violence has increased from 3,890 in 2004 to 4,348 in 2005. At the same time, the number of crisis centres has remained relatively stable since the 1980s. The report also refers to a study by the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs of women who were turned away from crisis centres. What steps have been taken to respond to the increased reporting and to ensure that all women have access to all services they may need, including the number and location of crisis centres and other support services?*

There is no reason to believe that the increased number of formal reports of domestic violence from 3,890 in 2003 to 4,348 in 2005 is due to an increase in violence. The increased number of reports is

probably rather an indication that more victims are contacting the police. Establishing a system of police domestic violence coordinators in 2004 and efforts made to ensure that the police show understanding and insight in their encounters with victims and next-of-kin, are among the measures believed to have enhanced the trust in the police. There is also a greater openness about the problem of domestic violence in general and being a victim is less taboo.

There are 50 crisis centres in Norway, from one to eight centres in each county. The number of women seeking support in a crisis centre has been relatively stable since 1986. Annually around 2,500 stays by women and 1,800 stays by children have been registered. The figures for 2005 were 2,287 stays by women and 1,753 stays by children.

There are no indications that there is a lack of space in Norwegian crisis centres. However to ensure the accessibility of all potential users of the centres the government has initiated several surveys and reports with the aim of developing measures to improve the assistance given to women exposed to domestic violence.

The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs is preparing an availability overview, to look into whether women all over the country are able to turn to a crisis centre in reasonable proximity to their home. The survey includes the geographical accessibility when it comes to distance and travelling time, as well as conditions affecting the accessibility such as opening hours, transportation, the size of the centres, marketing etc.

In addition, as one of the measures in the Government's Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence (2004-2007), the Norwegian Crisis Centre Secretariat and the Network of Women with Disabilities have conducted a survey regarding the municipalities' assistance to battered women with disabilities, including the accessibility to crisis centres.

In autumn 2006 the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs presented a report containing a study on women who were turned away from crisis centres. During a three month period in the autumn of 2005, every crisis centre in Norway took part in a three month project to register all women who for various reasons could not be accommodated in a crisis centre and had to be referred to other support services. The report concluded that every year at least 15 percent of the women seeking refuge in a crisis centre are turned away. The main reasons for this is women having extensive psychological problems and/or problems with drugs or alcohol, or have not been exposed to violence. 71 percent of the women were offered counselling before they were turned away and referred to other support services.

The findings and proposed recommendations of all surveys and reports will be taken into consideration when developing measures in the Governments new Action Plan against Domestic Violence, to be launched in 2007.

Regional resource centres in the field of violence and traumatic stress have been or are in the process of being established in the five regions of the country. These centres will assist the support services with information, counselling and development of competence, and help establish networks between

relevant collaborators in the regions, and will thus play an important role in improving the assistance given to women exposed to domestic violence.

In its political platform (the Soria Moria declaration) the Government announced its intention to intensify efforts to combat violence against women and children. As part of this effort an inter-ministerial working group has been appointed to consider establishing by law the services the crisis centres offer.

6. *Please provide information on the number of women murdered by their intimate partner (husbands, former husbands, cohabitants) per year in the last four years.*

The number of woman murdered by their *intimate partner* (husband, former husband, cohabitant or former cohabitant) in the course of the last four years was as follows:

2003 - 9 (total number of people murdered in Norway 44)

2004 - 5 (total number of people murdered in Norway 32)

2005 - 9 (total number of people murdered in Norway 29)

2006 - 7 (total number of people murdered in Norway 33)

7. *In its previous concluding comments, the Committee urged the State party to initiate research and analysis of the causes of the very low percentage of trials and convictions in reported rape cases. Please provide information on the study of judgments in rape cases carried out by the Director General of Public Prosecutions. What are the results of the working group's examination of the quality of investigations and prosecution of rape (article 6)?*

The Director General of Public Prosecutions has carried out a study of legally enforceable judgements in rape cases that ended in acquittals for the two and a half years period from the beginning of 2003. A working group has examined the quality of investigation and prosecution work in these cases. The final report was launched in February 2007.

The report gives a good description of the situation, and shows that there were 2.600 reported cases of rape during the period in question. 428 of these cases, or 16%, were prosecuted and of these 316 ended in a conviction. Thus in 84% of the cases a decision was made not to prosecute.

The working group concludes that the quality of investigation and prosecution of rape cases in Norway, is mostly of high quality, but there is a possibility that negative and incorrect attitudes and myths about rape and rape victims affect the results in some of the cases. Examples of such myths are the following:

- only certain kind of women becomes victims of rape - women with high moral standards are not exposed to rape
- many women report rapes which have not taken place
- rape is committed by persons unknown to the victim
- heavy violence is used in connection with rape
- prostitutes cannot be the victims of rape
- rape does not occur between husbands and wives

The report indicates that these myths and attitudes may be held, consciously or subconsciously by some police officers, public prosecutors or judges, and that such attitudes may influence the way in which cases are handled.

The working group has made a number of recommendations to strengthen the position of rape victims. Various measures are proposed aimed at increasing the level of competence among professional groups involved, such as police officers, public prosecutors and judges. In order to improve the ways in which rape cases are handled and ensure coherent and uniform processes the report suggests that sexual crime coordinators or a sexual crime team be appointed in every police district. In addition the working group has proposed to develop an electronic manual for the police in order to improve the way in which rape cases are handled.

In cooperation with the National Police Directorate the Ministry of Justice and the Police is considering how the recommendations may be followed up.

8. The Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (para 15) noted in its concluding observations of May 2005 a lack of specific legislation on domestic violence and suggested the adoption of specific legislation. Please describe the follow-up steps taken in response to this recommendation, and discuss any challenges to the introduction of relevant legal provisions. Please provide more details on the content of Section 219 of the Penal Code which entered into force on 1 January 2006 and on the status of the proposals contained in the report of the independent Committee on Violence against Women.

The Committee on Violence against Women recommended in its report 2003: 31 "The Right to a Life without Violence" adding a new section to the General Civil Penal Code aimed at domestic violence against women. The Ministry of Justice and the Police sent the report on a general hearing 8 December 2003. The recipients were asked to comment on the Committee's proposal to add a new penal provision targeting domestic violence against women.

In Odelstingsproposisjon No. 113 (2004-2005) (the document in which a bill is introduced) the Ministry of Justice proposed a new penal provision. Section 219 of the General Civil Penal Code was adopted 20 December 2005 and entered into force 1 January 2006:

"Any person who by threats, duress, deprivation of liberty, violence or any other wrong grossly or repeatedly maltreats

- a) his or her former or present spouse,
- b) his or her former or present spouse's kin in direct line of descent,
- c) his or her kin in direct line of ascent,
- d) any person in his or her household, or
- e) any person in his or her car shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years.

If the maltreatment is gross or the aggrieved person dies or sustains considerable harm to body or health as a result of the treatment, the penalty shall be imprisonment for a term not exceeding six

years. In deciding whether the maltreatment is gross, particular importance shall be attached to whether it has endured for a long time and whether such circumstances as are referred to in section 232 are present.

Any person who aids and abets such an offence shall be liable to the same penalty."

Although mostly women are victims of domestic violence, the Ministry of Justice and the Police emphasised in the preparatory works that also children and elders may be stricken. Occasionally, also men are victims of domestic violence. Consequently, the provision should be gender neutral.

The penal provision applies to domestic violence committed within marriages, as well as marriage-like relationships and registered partnerships, cf. the General Civil Penal Both physical violence and other types of maltreatment are criminalized, including mental abuse. It is not a condition that the victim has taken harm in any way. However, the maximum penalty increases if the perpetrator has caused grievous bodily harm. The Ministry of Justice and the Police believes violence against women to be characterised by complexity and repeated offences. It is important that domestic abuse is not regarded as isolated incidents. Therefore, section 219 poses as a condition that the maltreatment is either gross or repeated.

Section 219 second paragraph increases the maximum penalty if the act has certain consequences - considerable harm or death. The increased penalty is applicable when the perpetrator could have foreseen the possibility of such a consequence or if he failed to prevent it to the best of his ability after he has become aware of the risk (*culpa levissima*). If the perpetrator inflicted the consequences intentionally section 231 (considerable injury to the body or health of another person) or section 233 (manslaughter) of the General Civil Penal Code may be applied.

In 2006 there were 470 reported cases according to Section 219 in the General Civil Penal Code.

To follow up the recommendation from the Commission on Violence against Woman the Ministry of Justice and the Police has established a working group to report on the implementation of a pilot project involving the use of electronic monitoring in the case of persons who have violated a ban on visits ("reverse alarm" for violent offenders). The working group has been asked to present proposals regarding the type of electronic monitoring that should be used in the project and to study the need for, and make proposals regarding, solutions for organising electronic monitoring. The working group is to draw on the experience gained by Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Spain, all of which have tested or are in the process of testing the use of electronic monitoring of persons who have breached a ban on visits. The pilot project will begin in 2008.

9. According to the report, the Action Plan to Prevent Violence emphasizes treatment as well as punishment for men who commit domestic violence (article 6). How has the Action Plan to Prevent Violence contributed to preventing and ending violence against women? Please provide any information that is available about the impact, and effectiveness of these treatment programmes.

The Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress is a professional research and treatment centre for violent offenders and people witnessing or being exposed to violence. When it was established in 1987, it was the first treatment centre for male batterers in Europe. As part of the implementation of measures from the Action Plan to Prevent Domestic Violence the centre is conducting a study on the impact and effectiveness of the treatment program provided by Alternative to Violence (ATV). The study will be finalized in December 2007.

In order to provide satisfactory help for perpetrators all over the country the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress is conducting a study on the availability of services. The study will be finalized in May 2007 and will provide a basis for the Government's further achievement to develop nationwide support and treatment services for perpetrators.

10. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding comments that noted that a predominant and growing number of women who seek refuge in shelters for battered women are migrants, what measures are available aimed specifically at combating violence against migrant women and providing support services to them?

In 2004 and 2005 around half the women seeking refuge in a crisis centre were women with a non-Norwegian ethnic background. Due to the fact that an increasing number of women seeking refuge in crisis centres are of a non-Norwegian ethnic background, the government has, through its action plan against domestic violence, started a project to increase the local support services knowledge about battered migrant women's needs.

The Norwegian Resource Centre on Violence and Traumatic Stress has developed a training program built on three modules:

- Seminars for the crisis centre staff and cooperating support services. The seminars focus on how to best attend to the needs of women with an ethnic minority background.
- Establishment of a regional guidance service, were possible in connection with regional resource centres on violence and traumatic stress.
- Organise a "visiting arrangement" at crisis centres with a high number of women with an ethnic minority background and with a extensive experience in handling issues related to working with these women.

In 2005 and 2006, around 10 seminars were conducted for crisis centre staff and collaborators all over the country. The seminars were focusing on issues like set of rules, cultural knowledge, own attitudes and concrete ways to work with the target group. The seminars further intended to build networks between support services. A guide on the issue will be prepared in 2007. Recommendations resulting from the project will be taken into consideration when developing measures in the Government's new Plan of Action to Combat Domestic Violence, to be launched in 2007.

11. Please provide statistical data on the extent of trafficking in women, into, through and from Norway, as may be available. This should include statistical data on the number of victims trafficked for sexual exploitation, work and other forms of exploitation and on perpetrators punished and sentences imposed.

In 2006 the Government passed a resolution to establish a National Coordinating Unit for Assistance and Protection for the Victims of Human Trafficking. The unit started its work in November 2006. The unit is administered by the National Police Directorate and will assist the welfare services by providing methods for identifying victims and for planning and mobilising assistance and protection services.

The unit has also been given the task of developing statistical data on victims trafficked for exploitation and on perpetrators punished in court cases. At the moment we do not have a system of collecting such data.

Since January 2005 the Government has funded a project offering safe housing and follow-up to female victims of trafficking. The project builds on the existing nation-wide structure of shelters for victims of domestic violence. In 2005 the project admitted 18 victims into the project, while the figures for 2006 was 31 women. However, the project reported that in 2006 they received requests on behalf of a total of 82 women believed to be victims, but as mentioned, only 31 women ended up accepting help.

Two court cases concerning trafficking in human beings resulted in sentences in 2006: The Supreme Court passed final judgement against two men guilty of trafficking young Estonian women to Norway. They received prison sentences of five years and three years respectively.

The district court of Trondheim sentenced a man to two and a half years in prison for involvement in the same trafficking ring. It is noteworthy that he was also sentenced to pay one of the victims a total of NOK 2.260.000 in compensation.

12. The report notes (article 6) that little use is made of the option of a period of reflection and temporary stay (45 days) in Norway for victims of human trafficking who are not legal residents. How many victims of trafficking have taken advantage of the period of reflection? What is the status of plans to reform the programme of assistance and protection and extend the duration of the period? Is it possible for women victims of trafficking to obtain a stay permit on humanitarian grounds?

A new Plan of Action against Human Trafficking was introduced in early December 2006. Later the same month the reflection period was extended from 45 days till six months. Assumed victims who are not legal residents will accordingly be granted a 6- months temporary residence and work permit. Only one or two victims had previously taken advantage of the 45-day period of reflection. This was due largely to the fact that the economic benefits of seeking asylum caused the victims to choose that option in favour of a reflection period. The new reflection period is being developed into a tool providing predictable and secure health and social services and accommodation. As mentioned in connection with question 11, victims are already provided with safe housing and follow-up through a government-funded project.

In addition to qualifying for refugee status and asylum, foreign nationals that are victims of trafficking may receive a residence permit based on humanitarian grounds. There are several examples of cases where trafficked women have been granted a permanent residence permit on humanitarian ground.

13. Please provide information on measures taken to prevent and punish exploitation of prostitution of women and measures available for those women who seek to leave prostitution.

Women seeking to leave prostitution may seek assistance from various outreach teams working in the major cities. They will receive information about services available within the Norwegian welfare system.

The National Police Directorate is currently ensuring that police districts have the necessary knowledge and competence relating to all cases of sexual exploitation. Chiefs of police attended a seminar on the subject last year, and there is an ongoing human resource development programme throughout Norway.

In Oslo, the police launched a new unit in January 2007 to intensify outreach activities among prostitutes. The aim is to increase the number of investigations targeting pimps as well as traffickers.

14. What has been the impact of the Action Plan for Gender Equality in the Foreign Service (2002-2006), particularly in respect of senior-level positions such as Consul General or Ambassador in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

The Action Plan for Gender Equality in the Foreign Service (2002-2006) has had a tangible impact in respect of senior-level positions such as Consul General or Ambassador in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2002, the number of women holding such a position (head of mission) represented approximately 10 per cent; in 2005 this share had reached 15 per cent, and 20 per cent in 2006. This fell short of the objective set out in the Action Plan, which was 25 per cent, but based on concrete provisions, the share will reach 26.5 per cent in September 2007. The Action Plan comprised a number of measures intended to encourage women to seek senior positions, but getting enough qualified female applicants for these positions remains an important challenge in our continued efforts to increase gender equality at this level.

15. The report also notes the difficulty in changing established gender power structures most notably illustrated by the fact that men top 77 per cent of the lists of candidates put forth by political parties for elections. What efforts is the State party contemplating to respond to this situation so as to achieve equal representation of women and men in public bodies in all areas and at all levels?

In March 2003 the Committee of Ministers, the Council of Europe, where Norway is a member state, adopted the *Recommendation Rec (2003) on balanced participation of woman and men in political and public decision-making*, which defines balanced participation as a minimum representation of 40 per cent of both sexes in any decision-making body in political or public life.

In most countries women's representation forms a pyramid. A significant presence is often found at local councils, but representation decreases at the regional level and becomes even smaller in national legislative bodies and the cabinet. In Norway, however, the pyramid is inverted. At the local municipal council level women make up 35.6 per cent of the representatives, at the national level they make up 38 per cent of the parliament and 47 per cent of the cabinet.

In March 2007 the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development initiated a project called *Showrooms for Women in Local Politics*. The aim of the five-year project, running from 2007 to 2011, is to encourage and increase the participation of women as municipality councillors and mayors in Local Governments. 22 municipalities are selected to test different measures to increase the women's participation. The Government spends 20 million Norwegian NOK on this project.

The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development also funds different projects with the purpose of getting women more involved in politics, to run for re-elections or to promote the women on the list of candidates.

16. Under what circumstances may entities be granted exemption from the Gender Equality Act's requirement that each sex be represented by approximately 40 per cent of members appointed or elected to councils, committees, governing boards, and the like?

Section 21 in the gender Equality Act lays down that each gender must be represented by at least 40 per cent of the members of all official committees, boards, councils, delegations, etc. of four members or more. Committees etc. elected by proportional representation are exempted.

Section 21 was amended in 2005. It is only the Ministry of Children and Equality which is now competent to grant exemption from the gender representation rule. Before the amendment in 2005, other specialist ministries could grant exemption from the gender representation rule. The purpose of the amendment, was to secure a strict and consequent interpretation of the provision. The Ministry considered removing the provision on exemption, however it was concluded that it was necessary to maintain the possibility to grant exemption from the gender representation rule in some extraordinary cases. According to the section, this includes cases where there are special circumstances that make it obviously unreasonable to demand that the requirements be fulfilled. Examples of cases when the exemption rule can apply may be that it has not been possible to appoint suitable women or men to become a member of a committee. It is not sufficient that it has not been possible to appoint the leading people within the relevant field. In 2005 only 1 exemption from the gender representation rule was granted, 0 in 2006 and none so far in 2007. However, if institutions fail to apply for exemption, there might be some official committees, boards etc which are not in conformity with the requirements laid down in section 21. The Anti-Discrimination and Equality Ombud informs the Ministry if the Ombud gets information about boards etc which is unlawfully appointed.

17. The report notes the low representation of women in management and decision-making positions in both the private and public sectors. According to the report, 29 per cent of all managers were women in 2004, a small increase from 2001. Please indicate the measures that are being taken to increase women's opportunities to achieve key management and policymaking positions, and the impact of such measures.

In the private sector, 20 per cent of the top management positions were held by women in 2006. This implies a decrease compared to 2005, when 22 per cent of the top managers were women. 29 per cent of the middle management positions were held by women, compared to 27 per cent

in 2005. By January 1 2007, 38.2 per cent of the board members in public limited companies in the private sector, were women.

In public sector, the average share of female leaders was 35 per cent in 2005, but only 23 per cent of the top management positions were held by women. By January 1 2007, 41,2 per cent of the board members in companies wholly-owned by the state, were women.

In 2005, The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) concurred on an objective of 50 per cent female chief officers by 2015. KS has developed programmes to ensure that the objective will be reached, see page 61 in Norway's seventh report to CEDAW.

Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO) has developed different measures and activities to increase the number of women in boards and executive positions. This initiative is named Female Future, and is referred to on page 59 in Norway's seventh report to CEDAW.

In addition to this, Norway has adopted legislation demanding gender balance in boards of directors in both public and private sector, see page 61 in Norway's seventh report to CEDAW. The legislation has proved very effective. In 2003, the year the legislation was adopted, only 604 per cent of the board members in public limited companies were women. By 1 January 2007, almost 40 per cent of the board members in these companies are women.

Innovation Norway, a 100 per cent State-owned private limited company, promotes nationwide industrial development profitable to both the business economy and Norway's national economy, and helps release the potential of different districts and regions by contributing towards innovation, internationalisation and promotion. Innovation Norway focuses on strengthening women's position in business life, and has programmes aimed to support women as business owners, entrepreneurs, leaders and board members.

18. Please describe the results (article 5a) of the study conducted under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers to examine the effect of new media on young people's understanding of gender equality, gender and sexuality, and any steps, or measures taken in response to the study's findings.

The joint-Nordic research initiative has attempted to map out consumption patterns and attitudes regarding pornography as they are expressed among Nordic young people aged 14 to 18. At the centre of the project has been the issue of the proliferation of pornography and its effects on young people's perceptions about gender. In general, the picture that emerges on the basis of this project is a complex one and offers no easy answers.

Pornography turned out to be a well-known and actively debated phenomenon among Nordic young people, who consume pornography in varying degrees. They are familiar with various genres, and reveal themselves to be fairly reflective and critical in relation to what they see. At the same time, they point out that the consumption of pornography has become more standard,

but that it continues to be viewed as more "normal" for boys than for girls . This is explained by saying, among other things, that pornography is after all produced by men and for men.

In spite of the tendency toward normalisation, many things indicate that young people's approach to pornography is rather ambivalent. Among boys in particular, pornography works on the one hand as sexual inspiration in more private contexts, while at the same time it functions as a social rallying point, ridiculed and dismissed as containing exaggerated images of what sexuality really is in daily life. This ambivalence is not as marked among the study's girls, who, even when they are somewhat positively inclined toward pornography, express a critical stance toward it.

Distinguishing between pornographic images and the real world is something that young people of both genders are fairly explicit about. They question what they see. Also, pornography does not occur in a social or cultural vacuum, where other factors that influence young people are absent. All the same, many of the studies included in the project show that perceptions of what is fiction and what is true are not entirely watertight in young people's everyday lives.

Ideals regarding physical attractiveness imposed by pornography frequently colour their ideas of how people's bodies ought to look - not least their own. But it is true of both genders that they express themselves and act in complex ways in relation to the problem.

19. According to the report (article 10) gender roles in the educational system are largely reflected in the labour market, which is also segregated by gender. Please provide information on the impact of measures to encourage young women and men to consider a wider range of educational and occupational options.

Norwegian women and men tend to choose traditional educational and career paths. Men are dominant in technical and science subjects, while women are in the majority in teacher training, education, and health and social subjects. The gender roles in the educational system are largely reflected in the labour market, which is also segregated by gender.

As a result of their educational choices, a majority of women end up in less well paid jobs than men. In terms of untraditional career choices, more women than men choose untraditional careers because they have more to gain financially. Men will probably continue to be in the minority in occupations where there is a need for more equitable distribution of women and men, such as nursing, teaching and pre-school teaching. Until the female-dominated professions are paid at the same level as the male-dominated professions it will be difficult to challenge the gender-segregated labour market. The goal of more equal gender distribution presents a challenge for the social partners in wage negotiations.

Please find enclosed an attachment which provides information about the various educational sectors.

20. *According to the report, the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud received 113 complaints regarding discrimination against pregnant women in 2004, a significant increase over the previous year (articles 4.2 and 11). The report also notes that in job interviews many women are asked if they are pregnant or plan to become pregnant in the next few years. What steps has the Government taken to increase protection for pregnant women against direct or indirect discrimination and to enforce the Working Environment Act and the Gender Equality Act? Please provide an update on the scope of data collection and analysis on the nature and extent of discrimination against pregnant women during and after parental leave.*

In the period 2000-2005 the Equality and Discrimination Ombud received 392 complaints regarding discrimination against pregnant women. In 261 of these cases, the Ombud provided a written guidance. Illegal discrimination was decided in 45 of the complaints. The complaints are mainly related to appointments, dismissal/changes in the employment relationship and salary.

The Ministry of Children and Equality has in 2007 initiated a research project about the discrimination of pregnant women in working life. The aim is to get a good basis for developing and carrying out initiatives which will prevent such discrimination. The project will be completed in 2008.

21. *In its previous concluding comments, the Committee urged the State party to adopt policies and concrete measures to accelerate the eradication of pay discrimination against women, to further study the underlying causes of the wage gap and to work towards ensuring de facto equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market. The report refers to the creation of the Equal Pay Commission which also focuses on gender equality, equal pay and other aspects. Please describe the work of the Commission so far, and any impact of its recommendations.*

The Norwegian Equal Pay Commission was appointed by the King in Council on 16 June 2006.

The Government announced in its political platform that it will pursue a labour market policy in which gender equality and equal pay, opportunities for development and access to human resources development programmes are key elements.

Although the length of education is approximately the same for Norwegian women and men today and the percentage of working women is high and rising, analyses indicate that there has been no systematic reduction in the differences in hourly wage rates between women and men since 1985.

The Equal Pay Commission's tasks is to study the underlying causes of the pay gap and investigate what can be done to narrow the pay gap between women and men. In the course of its work, the Equal Pay Commission will consult a reference group consisting of ten social partner organisations on both the employer and the employee side. It has in March this year arranged an open seminar with the aim of initiating a public debate. A nes web-site www.likelonn.no has the same purpose.

The Commission has seven members, who are experts in a number of different fields, and it is headed by County Governor Anne Enger, a former government minister and nurse. The Equal Pay Commission will submit its recommendations to the Government no later than 1 March 2008.

22. According to the report, in 2004 women accounted for only 16 per cent of the appointments to professorships (article 10). It also refers to a judgement, of January 2003, by the EFTA Court on the practice of earmarking funding for female professorships as being in contravention to the EEA Agreement. Please describe how the Government uses article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 25 on temporary special measures to increase the proportion of women in senior academic posts.

After the judgment of the EFTA Court the Norwegian higher education institutions have stopped the practising of reserving posts for the under-represented gender and the Higher Education Act that recognised this practise is changed. The Government's strategy to increase the proportion of women in senior academic posts is described on page 48 in Norway's seventh periodic report to the Committee. The key points in this report is that each university designs their own measurements and action plans for gender equality, with targets for gender distribution and measures to achieve these targets. It is the institutions themselves that formulate various gender equality measures on the basis of their own subjects, needs and overarching guidelines. For example some universities reward their university departments for every woman that is appointed. Some universities have programs for supporting women in research. These programs can entail measures as leave from teaching, research funds for women and additional funding when women are appointed.

23. In 2004 the rate of underemployment for women part-time workers was 73.5 per cent compared to 26.5 per cent of men. The Committee, in its previous concluding comments, and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights have expressed concern about women's disproportionate representation in part-time jobs. The phenomenon primarily affects female-dominated sectors such as retail, education and the health and social sectors. What concrete measures, in addition to legislative changes discussed in the report under article 11, paragraph 1, has the Government taken to reduce underemployment among women, targeting those sectors, and what has been the impact of those measures?

We would like to clarify the figures on underemployment. Underemployed in per cent of part-time workers figures was 16.2 for men, and 16.0 for woman (2006 Statistics Norway). Because of the high rate female part-time workers it is nevertheless more common for woman to be underemployed. The total figure of underemployed Norwegian employees is 108 000, and 76 per cent is woman.

42 percent of all the Norwegian women work part-time, compared to 12 per cent of the men. In Norway we do have a very high participation by women in paid work. Women count for nearly half of the Norwegian workforce. However, Norway have a biased labour market with some few female dominated sectors, such as health and social care, retail and education. Half of the Norwegian working mothers (at least one child below 15 years) are employed within health and

social care or in the education. And as mentioned above, it is very common for women to work part-time.

The Norwegian Government will pursue a labour market policy in which gender equality and equal pay are key elements. The Government wants more women into full-time, especially under-employed women. As a measure the Government is paying for education for employees within health and social care if the municipalities can offer full-time work in stead of part-time.

The Norwegian Equal Pay Commission was appointed June 2006 and shall investigate what can be done to narrow the wage gap between women and men. If the hourly wage rates for typical female dominated sectors increases to the level of men, research shows it will also influence the part-time rate indirectly.

24. What measures have been undertaken to create further economic opportunities for immigrant women, and what has been the impact of those measures? In addition to language classes, what training opportunities are available to non-citizen women, in different sectors of the economy?

The Government is working for a tolerant and diverse society. Each and every person shall have the same rights, obligations and opportunities, regardless of their ethnic background, gender, religion, sexual orientation or functional ability. The goal for the Government's social inclusion policy is that each person who lives in Norway shall participate in society and have equal opportunities. The Government submitted a White paper to the Parliament in November 2006 which contains the Government's strategies and proposals for strengthening employment and inclusion of persons who are at the fringe of the labour market. The strategies and proposals form part of a range of measures and policy proposals in order to fulfil the political values and ambitions of the Government. The measures include several groups, and some are intended for the population in general, but some are exclusively for immigrant women. Actions are taken to obtain more knowledge about how to reduce the obstacles for participation in working-life for immigrant women in particular, and to elucidate the start of a certain qualifying program for women who are not comprised by the introduction program for newly arrived immigrants.

In addition to this, an action plan has been launched to underline the Government's focus on integration and inclusion of persons with immigrant background. The action plan contains several measures where immigrant women are a target group. These are:

- Admission to labour market programmes. Currently, immigrants are a target group for admission to labour market programmes. With the around 11,800 programme places in 2007, the Government furthers to strengthen that focus on immigrants by providing 1,300 programme places for immigrants, as well as staff resources for following up programme participants. This applies to both newly arrived immigrants in introductory programmes and immigrants with special assistance needs.
- Continuing the New Chance -programme. This is a programme featuring paid qualification based on the model of the introduction programme for immigrants who

after several years in Norway have no permanent ties to the labour market and thus depend on social benefit. This programme shall contribute to giving more immigrants a permanent contact with the labour market.

- Continued focus on immigrants' entrepreneurship activities. Immigrants founding new enterprises in Norway make a positive contribution to value creation in society. Two million Norwegian krone (Nkr) are allocated to fund pilot projects involving entrepreneurship among immigrants, and to obtain more knowledge on how to facilitate entrepreneurship activities among immigrants.

Some measures in the Action Plan refer to the immigrant population in general, but women will also benefit from them:

- Measures to increase recruitment of persons with immigrant backgrounds to public administration and health enterprises.
- Reinforce the work focus in the introduction programme.
- Reinforce the program for basic competence in working life.
- Norwegian language training for asylum-seekers.
- Measures for including young people with immigrant background, such as increased resources to schools with a high level of minority-language pupils, a focus on positive role models and strengthening of urban communities with poverty problems.

Lastly, women benefit from the measures taken the last couple of years when it comes to strengthening the chances to employment and further education, such as:

- The introduction program (the Introductory Act) for newly arrived refugees and family members reunited with them, between 18 and 55 years who require basic qualifications. The scheme combines an introduction program with an economic benefit which participants are eligible for. Women participate on an equal footing with men, and the benefit to each individual has proved to make a huge difference for women with immigrant background. The aim of the program, which will be adapted to individual needs and abilities, is to provide basic skills in the Norwegian language, insight into the Norwegian society and to prepare for participation in working life and/or further education. The programs may run for up to two years, with additional periods for approved leaves of absence. The municipalities shall provide programs for newly arrived immigrants who are resident in the municipality as soon as possible and within three months after a person is settled in the municipality.
- As of September 2005 the Introductory Act also regulates the right and obligation to participate in Norwegian language training and social studies. The right and obligation to participate in training free of charge applies to foreign nationals between 16 and 55 years of age who have been granted a residence or work permit that constitutes grounds for a settlement permit. Completion of the 300 hours class is from the same time a condition for receiving a settlement permit and Norwegian citizenship. The training must be

completed within the first three years in Norway. Beyond completion of the compulsory training, those with a right and an obligation to participate in language training will have the opportunity to take extra classes if their command of Norwegian is poor. All training must be completed within the first five years in Norway.

25. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in its concluding observations of May 2005, has expressed concern about the high incidence of eating disorders among young women. What measures are being taken to address this challenge, and to provide psycho-social support for young women suffering from such disorders? Please also indicate what public awareness-raising efforts are in place to strengthen a positive image of young women in the media and advertising.

Different approaches are used to raise awareness and help young people to deal with the image created in the media and advertising of the need of a perfect appearance.

Children and young people

An interactive web based educational tool has been developed, aimed to give pupils a better understanding of the media and advertising in general (the THINK project). Instead of focusing on problems connected with eating disorders, the project aims to enable the pupils to see through the perfect images created in advertising and media. Their knowledge of how the business works reduces their susceptibility and builds their confidence (www2.skolenettet.no/tenk/). Related issues are also discussed in other public websites directed at young people (www.ung.no).

Parents

A discussion programme on topics such as the sexualised presentation of girls and boys in the media has been developed for use at parent-teacher meetings. The objective is to encourage and enable parents to reflect and to discuss how they can strengthen their children's ability to cope with pressure regarding purchasing, dieting, fashion and consumption (www.foreldrepraten.no).

Fashion industry

A leaflet with a set of guidelines regarding marketing directed at children and young people has been developed in cooperation between the Consumer Ombudsman and representatives from advertising and fashion industry. The initiative was taken in order to raise ethical awareness within the Norwegian fashion industry. In the leaflet it is stated for example that one should strive to mirror a varied body image through the choice of models and to promote healthy body ideals when directing marketing at children and young people.

27. Please provide information about the results of the study conducted by the Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research at the University of Oslo on the cases of forced marriage. Please also include information, including statistics, if available, on the incidence of

forced marriage in Norway, measures taken to address the phenomenon and the impact of such measures.

The study conducted by The Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research at the University of Oslo on the cases of forced marriage was made public 19 February 2007. Please find enclosed information about the study. The study includes some numbers, however there exist no official statistic on forced marriages in Norway.

Norway has carried out many measures to combat forced marriage. In 1998 the Government presented a three-year Plan of Action Against Forced Marriage, which contained 40 measures covering many areas, such as information, dialogue and collaboration, crisis, training and human resource development, regulatory amendments, research and documentation. In 2002 the Government presented 30 new measures to combat forced marriage. This time they were concentrated on the themes of crisis assistance for young people, awareness-raising, improvement of competence and regulations. Please find enclosed the two plans.

The government plans to present a new plan with several measures to combat forced marriage before the summer holiday.

28. Please provide an update on the situation of refugee and asylum-seeking women in Norway, including statistical data on the number of such women and trends over the past four years, their economic opportunities and protection from domestic violence.

In 2003 Norway received more than 15,600 applications for asylum, but only around 25 per cent of those applications were from women. There was a marked decline in the number of asylum applications in 2004, when only 7,900 applications were received. 21 per cent of the applicants were adult women. In 2005 and 2006 the total number of asylum applications was 5,400 and 5,300 respectively. The percentage of women was around 34 per cent in 2005 and 28 per cent of the adult asylum seekers in 2006.

From 2003 to 2005 the percentage of women granted a residence permit in Norway on the basis of an asylum application increased from around 40 per cent in 2003 to 62 per cent in 2005. This includes cases where asylum, residence on other protection grounds or residence on humanitarian grounds has been granted. The number for men who got a residence permit on the basis of asylum application remained stable at around 40 per cent. This high numbers might partly be explained by the fact that there has been greater awareness around gender based persecution both in Norway and internationally the last years. In 2006, 69 per cent of all women applying for asylum in Norway were granted a residence permit, compared to 50 per cent of the men. When considering only those granted refugee status, the number was 24 per cent for the women and 10 per cent for the men in 2006.

The above mentioned figures are collected from statistics published by the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, and does not take into account decisions reversed by the Immigration Appeals Board.

The Norwegian government continues to focus on gender based persecution, and is in the process of drawing up guidelines for the handling of cases with gender related claims.

29. Please provide information about the measures taken in order to make widely known the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which Norway ratified on 5 March 2002.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention was one of the topics at the Milestone conference in January 2004. A Milestone conference has been organised annually since 2000 by the Government in cooperation with the umbrella organisation FOKUS and the former Centre for Gender Equality. FOKUS organises Norwegian NGOs active in development cooperation targeting women. The former minister of Children and Family Affairs, Laila Dāvøy, highlighted the importance of the Communications Procedure which allows either individuals or groups of individuals to submit individual complaints to the Committee.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Children and Equality has issued a leaflet with a new authorised translation of the text of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) Arni **Hole**
Director General

(Signed) Trond Ø. **Christensen**
Deputy Director General

Annex

Summary of report on forced marriage cases dealt with by public support services. incidence and challenges

The Ministry of Children and Equality wished to gather information on the incidence of forced marriage in Norway with a view to strengthening public support services and preventive measures. This report is part of this process. Our project has sought to determine the incidence of forced marriage cases and related problems in some of the support services, and to describe some key aspects of these cases and the way in which the support services have dealt with them. The project has focused on the years 2005 and 2006.

Underlying data

The information on which the report is based consists mainly of a simple questionnaire survey carried out among municipal child welfare services (73 % response rate) and among state teams of child welfare professionals, and a survey of cases dealt with by three specialised agencies, the Directorate of Immigration (UDI)'s Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage, Selvhjelp for innvandrere og flyktninger (Self-Help for Immigrants and Refugees – SEIF) and the Red Cross Information Helpline for forced marriages. These agencies provide emergency assistance and advisory services in connection with forced marriage, and are well-known for publishing annual overviews of the cases they deal with, which are often used by the media as indications of the incidence of forced marriage. Information has otherwise been obtained from six family counselling offices in Oslo, public health nurses and school counsellors at ten upper secondary schools in Oslo, public health nurses at nine public health clinics for young people in Oslo, nine Norwegian foreign service missions and the MiRA Resource Centre, as well as from crisis centre statistics. The survey shows that while many consider this to be a timely and important topic, it is difficult to quantify actual cases. The numerical data must therefore be interpreted with caution.

Few cases of forced marriage in the child welfare services, more cases related to control of girls' sexuality

As far as “forced marriage cases” are concerned, child welfare offices have dealt with cases concerning 45 children in 2005 and 18 children in the first ten months of 2006, or a total of 63 children. There is a clear majority of girls (83 %). Over half of these children have parents from Iraq, Pakistan and Somalia, with an approximately equal percentage from each group.

With regard to cases relating to “authoritarian upbringing and control of girls' sexuality”, the offices report that they have dealt with cases concerning a total of 98 children in 2005 and 115 children in the first ten months of 2006. If we combine the two types of cases, there was a total of 276 affected children during the period investigated, 143 in 2005 and 133 in the first ten months of 2006. As many as 77% belong to the category “authoritarian upbringing and control of girls' sexuality with a view to protecting family honour”. By far the majority of these

children are girls. The figures cover the entire range of cases from those in which only a report of concern has been received to cases in which responsibility for the care of a child has been taken over from the parents.

Table 1: Summary of forced marriage cases and cases relating to authoritarian upbringing and control of girls' sexuality dealt with by municipal child welfare services. Number of children

	2005	As of October 2006	Total	Percentage
Force	45	18	63	23
Authoritarian/Control	98	115	213	77
Total	143	133	276	100

Important topic in other agencies, but few statistics available

Family counselling services currently receive few inquiries that can be regarded as relating to forced marriage. However, the family counselling offices in Oslo are concerned about this problem and consider their expertise in family conflict management to be highly relevant in such cases. This report supports the view that family counselling services should be involved to a greater extent in dealing with conflicts between young people and their parents, provided that the physical and mental safety of the young person is safeguarded.

The staff of upper secondary schools and public health clinics in Oslo also receive inquiries from young people who are being pressured to marry, but several public health nurses consider a strict, controlling upbringing to be as big a problem as forced marriage. Most of the inquiries come from girls, but boys are affected as well. The young people who come to talk to the nurses often feel strongly pressured to remain loyal to their family, and they are struggling to find a way out that does not entail breaking with their family. The conclusion is that public health nurses, counsellors and upper secondary teachers should be better prepared to deal with this problem. Not least, these groups of professionals should be given help to "see" young people in difficulty and not merely wait for the young people to contact them. Of the Norwegian embassies that have provided data, only the embassy in Islamabad has reported that it is regularly contacted by young people who are in danger of a forced marriage.

Different types of cases at specialised agencies

The data that was examined consisted of 64 "acute crisis cases" at SEIF, 172 "specific inquiries" to the Red Cross Information Helpline and 114 cases handled by the Directorate of Immigration's Expert Team in 2006. The Red Cross proved to be involved in 49 of the Expert

Team's cases. Apart from that, we found little duplicate registration of cases. The vast majority of cases and inquiries concern girls and young women. Pakistan and Iran are clearly the most common national backgrounds in the cases registered by all the agencies. Between 67 and 90 % of the persons concerned are between 15 and 25 years old.

The survey is based on the statistical unit used by each agency itself as the most important category in its own statistics, and the delimitation of this unit ("case") varies from one agency to another. This is primarily due to the fact that the agencies have different roles and working methods, and thus also a different basis for registration of cases and statistics. A review of the agencies' registration procedures show clear potential for improvement, but there are no grounds for claiming that the agencies deliberately inflate the figures.

Table 2: Total overview of specialised agencies. Number of cases/inquiries and number of individuals, broken down by gender. 2006						
	UDI's Expert Team		Red Cross		SEIF	
Number of "cases"	114 "cases"		172 "specific inquiries"		64 "acute crisis cases"	
Number of individuals affected	128		184		74	
Gender (number)	114	14	159	25	61	13
Gender (%)	89	11	86	14	82	18

The MiRA Resource Centre reported 66 cases in the category "forced marriage requiring follow-up" in the first ten months of 2006. Figures from crisis centres for 2006 are not yet available, but in 2005 the centres registered 64 residents who stated that a forced marriage was the cause of their initial stay at the centre.

Significant number of unrecorded cases likely

The discussion regarding statistics has a two-part conclusion. Firstly, existing case statistics cannot on the whole be said to be a satisfactory measure of the extent of specific individual problems. This is not a major problem as long as the limitations of the statistics are clearly stated, a principle that is often transgressed these days. Secondly, and considerably more important, there are strong reasons to assume that the actual number of genuine problems is far higher than these statistics show. In particular, there are solid grounds for stating that the low number of cases registered by public agencies must not be used to play down the extent of the problem. Instead it is a troubling indication of how little is recorded by the present system. The problem lies partly in young people not asking for help, and partly in them not being seen.

Great need and desire for expertise

The results of the survey of the need for specialised expertise in child welfare services, family counselling services, school counsellors and public health nurses are unequivocal. These agencies both need and want to have more expertise, but training must to a greater degree be adapted to the needs of individual occupational groups. An in-depth analysis of complex problems and dilemmas is also sorely needed. Many people are interested in the subject and have acquired considerable practical experience, but support services are still too dependent on fortuity and dedicated individuals. The general pattern is that those who have experience of this problem are the ones who request more knowledge. Moreover, the survey shows that there is a strong need to develop methods and professionalise efforts.

“Forced marriage” too narrow

The term “forced marriage” designates a problem that is difficult to delimit and expose, both as a problem and as a “case”. A main conclusion of this survey is that “forced marriage” often becomes too narrow a focus. It is time to focus on a broader complex of problems that can be called “strict authoritarian and patriarchal upbringing aimed at protecting family honour and particularly daughters’ sexual chastity”. Young people who need help must be given more options for obtaining assistance.

Authoritarian upbringing and control of young women’s sexuality

Control can consist in strict rules, monitoring and the imposition of sanctions for breaches of norms, but also the fear of potential reactions. The mechanisms and methods of control include a broad range of physical and psychological violence, including threats of violence, harassment and humiliation, threats of and actual exclusion from the community, and “emotional blackmail”. The most serious forms of violence include murder and pressure to commit suicide. Besides forced marriage, control may include prohibiting a woman from having a boyfriend or any male friends at all. For married women, it is a question in some cases of being forced to stay in a marriage against their will and of tolerating violence and abuse in their marriage because the family or families oppose divorce. In other words, this problem is related to parents who limit their children’s right of self-determination, freedom of movement and freedom of participation in society as well as the right not to be subjected to violence and other humiliation.

Marginalised topic for particularly interested persons in the non-governmental sector

The work on this survey has highlighted certain general deficiencies in the assistance currently available to young people who are subjected to forced marriage, violence and control. After ten years on the political agenda, forced marriage is still a topic reserved for particularly interested persons and special measures, a topic that is largely dealt with outside the ordinary public support services. The field is dominated by project-based, ad hoc measures run by non-governmental organisations. In the report we ask whether the Norwegian authorities are acting

responsibly in leaving it mainly up to non-governmental organisations to address the problem of such serious abuse and dangerous situations. This is not intended as a criticism of such organisations, but as a strong call for putting in place coherent, sustainable efforts in the public support services. Reassigning responsibility in this way will not render the organisations superfluous, but their role will be more that of supplementing and offering a critical alternative to public agencies.

Invisible in violence prevention efforts

The report points to a paradoxical combination of the “hypervisibility” of forced marriages in the media and their virtual invisibility in the ordinary support services. It is particularly unfortunate that these forms of violence and oppression have been marginalised in the policy fields of “domestic violence against women” and “violence against and abuse of children”, and in the child welfare services in general. The range of measures designed to prevent “domestic violence” primarily targets partner violence, while violence against daughters or sisters is invisible. It is claimed that this delimitation has resulted in the marginalisation, in terms of organisation and expertise, of forced marriage as a form of abuse. The child welfare services call, among other things, for greater focus on possible conflicts between the best interests of the child, on the one hand, and the norms of collaborating with parents and implementing measures at the lowest possible level on the other. To a greater degree, it must be recognised that the child welfare services’ statutory duty to inform parents can cause immediate escalation of the threat in the most serious cases.

More follow-up after breaking with the family, more solution models

There is a long way to go before young people who fear or are in danger of forced marriage have a satisfactory range of support services in Norway. As regards the content of support services, attention is focused on two precarious deficiencies: 1. The lack of follow-up for young people who break with their family, particularly as regards their mental health, and 2. The very limited help available for those who do not wish or need to break with their family. More programmes for dealing with family conflicts are required as an alternative or necessary supplement to helping the young person to make the break.

A number of proposed measures

The report proposes a number of measures and action to improve support services for young people and families. Among other things, the Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage must be strengthened and moved from the Directorate of Immigration to an agency responsible for preventing domestic violence. Coordination of crisis housing must be transferred from non-governmental organisations to public agencies, and a specialised child welfare institution must be established as soon as possible. In line with the report’s general recommendation, the Ministry is urged to carry out a survey of authoritarian upbringing and control of girls’ sexuality, in part based on the experience gained in an ongoing Swedish survey.

Appended to this report is a memorandum concerning the possibilities of carrying out a representative questionnaire survey on the incidence of force in arranged marriages. It is argued that while this is feasible, there will be significant challenges as regards the methods employed.

Universities and colleges

Although Norwegian women make traditional choices in terms of their education and careers, Norway nevertheless has a very high proportion of women with higher educational qualifications. The advance of women into higher education might be described as a silent revolution, a gradual increase that has totally changed gender representation in higher education over a 30-year period. There are now more women starting and completing higher education than men.

Girls and women are now choosing from among far more careers than in the past, and previously male dominated educations such as the medical and veterinary programmes of study are attracting a steadily increasing percentage of women.

Today there is a majority of female students in almost all the major scientific fields of study in the universities. One exception is the natural sciences, engineering sciences and craftsmanship, where 70 percent of the students are men. In health and care taking, 80 percent of the students are women.

More than 21 per cent of Norwegian women have a university or college education, compared with 16 per cent of Norwegian men. However, there are still more men with a long university education (more than four years). In the 25-39 age group, more than 40 per cent of Norwegian women have a university or college education, compared with 18 per cent in the 60-66 age group. The difference between the various age groups is far less marked in the case of men. In the under-50 age group, a larger proportion of women than men have higher education, while in the over-50 age group the reverse is the case.

Highest level of education for women and men aged 16 and over, 1990 and 2004.

Per cent.

Level of Education	1990		2004	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Primary school	36.3	30.1	21.4	17.6
Secondary School	49.7	53.0	53.9	59.3
University/college 4 years	12.7	11.7	21.2	15.9
University/college more than 4 years	1.3	5.2	3.6	7.2

Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST)

The OECD has compared the percentage of students with a Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) orientation from different countries. Norway is one of the countries where the trend has been the most negative; the percentage in the last ten years has decreased considerably.

And Norwegian girls and women choose MST to a considerably lesser extent than boys and men. This is a trend in much of the western world, and interest is not increasing: the percentage of girls who graduate from natural science subjects and technical subjects has remained at about 25 per cent for the last ten years. A majority of the students who choose MST in upper secondary education often do this in order to be able to apply for restricted programmes of study, e.g. medicine.

The Government's strategy to encourage untraditional educational choices at Universities and Colleges

When assessing students for higher education, additional points may be awarded for applicants of the gender that is clearly under-represented. As of 1 January 2005 additional points are awarded for female applicants to specific engineering and informatics studies, and to agricultural and maritime college studies. Similarly, men are awarded additional points if they apply for animal nursing and veterinary studies. The Ministry of Education and Research may also set special quotas for certain courses in special circumstances. As of today, quotas have been established for female applicants for two specific master's degree programmes in engineering subjects.

Strategies to promote girls and women's interest in Mathematics, Science and Technology – including ICT

The Ministry of Education and Research has launched a programme to promote mathematics and science subjects entitled ***Mathematics and science subjects naturally – strategy to strengthen mathematics and science subjects in the period 2002-2007***. The strategy was revised 2006 and given the title ***Strategy 2006-2009; A Joint Promotion of Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST)*** and now focuses more strongly on recruiting girls and women to these subjects. Several national centres are involved in this process, including the Mathematics Centre – the national centre for mathematics in education and “Renate” – the national centre for contact with business and industry on recruitment to mathematics and science subjects. The centres focus especially on efforts to increase the interest of girls and women in these subjects. One of the tasks of the centres is to seek to increase the number of women applying for mathematics, science and technology studies and careers.

Digital Gender Divides

In late 2004 the Ministry of Education and Research commissioned a report as a part of the Ministry's ongoing Programme for Digital Literacy. The report is titled "Digital Gender Divides".

Digital Gender Divides in Norway: What do we know?

Main features:

- *The use of ICT has become part of everyday life for boys and girls/men and women in today's society.*
- *The divides we observed between genders with regard to interest in and use of ICT in the mid 1990s are less visible today.*
- *There are considerable differences within each gender group with regard to the use of ICT.*
- *There are different kinds of digital competencies that run across the genders.*
- *There are some visible differences with regard to ICT usage between the majority of boys/men and girls/women*

Bottom line:

- *There is a large variability in the use of ICT and digital competencies for both genders.*
- *We have not come far enough in defining what kind of digital competencies everybody should possess.*

Among pupils (primary and secondary education) we find that

- *The majority of both boys and girls use computers to a larger degree outside school than at school*
- *the level of education on the part of the parents influences both boys' and girls' use of computers at home*
- *boys, whose fathers have higher education, have the most extensive and varied use of ICT*
- *girls and boys mean that they have equal competence in those areas in school where ICT is used*
- *boys spend considerable more time in front of the computer at home than girls do*
- *Most boys at all ages have a larger interest in computer games than girls*
- *the majority of girls show the greatest interest in using ICT for communication purposes*
- *many young girls are advanced users of mobile technologies*

Further,

- *there is a risk for digital divides between girls and boys because*
 - *boys have a more extensive and varied use of ICT at home compared to girls*
 - *the educational level of the fathers has a great impact on boys' use of ICT*
- *Few schools are able to offer a varied use of ICT that exploits and further develops girls and boys different interests and competencies*
- *Schools that invests heavily in a broad and integrated use of ICT in the subject matter achieve the best equality between boys and girls*

As a follow up of this report the Ministry of Education and Research, in cooperation with OECD, will arrange an OECD-expert meeting on gender, ICT and education that will take place in Norway in the spring 2008.

- The topics to be covered during this expert meeting will be the following:
The knowledge base about gender differences in the use of digital technologies and its implications for education.
- What causes could explain these differences?
- Which could be the most appropriate responses, both in terms of the educational strategies and policymaking?

The choice of stream of study in upper secondary school

Educational and occupational choices are formed throughout the educational process. However, the choice of stream of study on a foundation course in upper secondary school is the first major formal educational choice a young person makes after ten years of primary and lower secondary education. This choice has a fairly large impact on pupils' subsequent educational path, although there are also possibilities for qualifying for higher education on the basis of a foundation course on a vocational stream.

The distribution of first-year students between the different streams of study not only reflects the young people's desires. It may also be affected by the available capacity on the various streams around the country. Nevertheless the figures give a fairly good picture of young Norwegians' choice of stream of study in upper secondary education. There are gender differences in terms of the distribution of students between the various streams in the first year of upper secondary school. On some streams of study, such as Health and Social Studies and Design, there is a majority of girls. On other streams of study, such as Construction, Electrical and Mechanical studies there is a majority of boys. The gender distribution on the various streams of study has been relatively stable in recent years. From the end of the 1990s until 2004, the only significant changes in gender distribution have been in streams of study with very few places, such as Environmental Studies and Chemistry and Processing. The gender

distribution for the new subjects Media and Communication and Sales and Service, which were introduced in 2000, is rather more equal than for the other streams of study.

No comprehensive surveys have been carried out of the reasons for traditional choices of education in Norway in recent years. The Norwegian Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education carried out surveys of this type in the early 1980s and in the 1990s. There is reason to believe that many of the findings of these surveys have not changed significantly.

Why do girls make the choices they do in upper secondary education? Some of the findings of a survey carried out in 1995 were as follows:

- *To have possibilities for work in the place where they live.* 16 per cent of girls on the general course of study gave this as a reason, compared with 34 per cent of boys on vocational courses.
- *To satisfy their interest in specific subjects.* Girls stressed this more often than boys.
- *To have a job where they could utilise their abilities.*
- *To have a job that ensures contact with other people.* 3 out of 10 boys believed this was important, compared with 6 out of 10 girls.
- *Possibility for a high income.* This was regarded as important by 6 out of 10 boys on the general course of study and by only 3 out of 10 girls on vocational courses. In this area, there was a change in young people's preferences from 1980 to 1991. Only 2 out of 10 pupils on the general course of study stated that a high income was important in 1980, compared with 4 out of 10 both in 1991 and 1995.
- *To have a job that can be combined with child care.* This was important for 3 out of 10 boys on both the general and the vocational courses of study, for 4 out of 10 girls on the general course of study, and for 5 out of 10 girls on vocational courses.
- *To be able to help other people.* This was important for 5 out of 10 girls on vocational courses, 4 out of 10 girls on the general course of study, but only for 2 out of 10 boys on both the general course and vocational courses.

The survey shows that girls pursue their interests in specific subjects. It will be necessary to focus continuously on young people's career choices and also to encourage breadth in their educational interests.

Pupils' performance

One of the factors that have affected the educational debate in Norway since the turn of the millennium is the steadily increasing focus on pupils' performance. *Even though Norwegian pupils and students make traditional educational choices, girls achieve better results than boys at school.* Statistics from major international surveys and statistics showing the final grades of

Norwegian pupils in upper secondary school not only show that girls score high in terms of grades, but that they also achieve better grades than boys. This has led to a debate in Norway about whether boys are now the losers and whether Norwegian schools are better suited to the development of girls' cognitive skills.

As a measure to strengthen the gender perspective, the Ministry of Education and Research requested the Directorate of Education to develop a strategy to improve the gender equality in education on the basis of current knowledge and research into the reasons for boys' and girls' educational and career choices. The strategy will also be viewed in conjunction with other important education policy goals, such as recruitment to science subjects and the recruitment of men to work in day care centres, teaching, etc. The strategy will be completed before the summer of 2007 and will contain several practical measures for the period 2007 – 2011:

The Strategic Plan for Gender Equality 2007-2011

- Work in progress in the Ministry of Education and Research, in collaboration with The Directorate for Education and Training.
- Start in august 2007
- Lasts for 5 years
- National coordinator is The Directorate for Education and Training.
- Focus on boys and girls age 0-19 in early childhood training and care (kindergarten), primary and secondary education and training establishments
- Will be evaluated.

Areas of Measures

The overall objective of the Strategic Plan:

A gender equalised society, where all people is given the opportunity to live accordingly to abilities and interests, irrespective of traditional gender expectations.

1 Main objective

The first objective is to ensure that the care, learning and learning environment in kindergarten, primary and secondary education and training establishments, promote gender equality between boys and girls.

Areas of measures:

- Increase the number of kindergartens, training establishments and schools that integrate gender equality work in their daily activities.
- Improve competence in kindergartens, training establishments and schools, about conditions that create gender equality between boys and girls.

2 Main objective

- The learning process shall prepare boys and girls for education and a choice of profession according to ability and interests, irrespective of traditional gender expectations.

Areas of Measures:

- Help children and young people to choose an education and profession, that do not depend on their gender.
- Increase the recruitment of girls to education and a profession within mathematics and science.
- Improve the gender balance in the vocational education.

3 Main objective

The third objective is to promote a better gender balance amongst employees in kindergarten and school.

Areas of Measures:

- Improve the competence in gender issues and gender equality in preschool- teacher training and teacher training.
- Increase the number of men that work in kindergartens and in schools, and increase the number of men that complete their teacher training.

Below we present some previous strategies and guides to strengthen the gender perspective in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education:

The heads of all Norwegian schools are responsible for ensuring that work on gender equality has high priority.

The Ministry of Education and Research has produced a brochure entitled *Kjekk og pen* (Handsome and Pretty, 2001). The brochure provides information on gender equality and gives examples of how the gender perspective can be implemented in different subjects and areas. The brochure also urges schools to implement appropriate measures. It is intended to be a guide for gender mainstreaming in primary and lower secondary schools.

Several other brochures and guides have been produced in recent years:

- The former Norwegian Board of Education (now the Directorate of Education) and the former Centre for Gender Equality (now the Gender Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud) together produced the brochure *Ungdom, film og kjønn. Håndbok for lærere om likestilling* (Youth, Film and Sex. Handbook for teachers on gender equality), adapted for the medium level*, the lower secondary level and upper secondary schools. This material, which focuses especially on gender roles and the associated debate, was launched in August 2003 together with a teacher's guide. The aim of this material is to

make pupils more aware of role patterns, provide teachers with practical educational tools for this purpose, and follow up selected topics from the *Kjekk og Pen* brochure.

- At the request of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, in 2001 the Norwegian Board of Education produced the book *Samliv og seksualitet. Ressursbok for lærere* (Partnership and Sexuality. A resource book for teachers). The aim was to improve the competence of lower secondary school teachers and health personnel in teaching young people about partnership, sexuality and contraception.
- As a follow-up to the project *Conscious Educational Choices*, which ended in 2000, the Norwegian Board of Education prepared a guide on educational and vocational counselling for counsellors in lower and upper secondary schools. The purpose of the project was to encourage young people make less traditional educational choices.

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in its concluding observations of May 2005, has expressed concern about high incidence of eating disorders among young women (para 29). What measures are being taken to address this challenge, and to provide psychosocial support for young women suffering from such disorders? Please also indicate what public awareness raising efforts are in place to strengthen a positive image of young women in the media and advertising?

The incidence of eating disorders in Norway is relative stable (Götestam et al 2004).

In planning the services, special measures have been given to those already having developed eating disorders or those in the danger zone. In addition, priority has been directed at preventive measures. Eating disorders can in many cases be prevented. Early intervention and close monitoring can make the course and outcome more benign.

The supply of qualified personnel has increased by the educational programme “Body and self-confidence“. The programme is established in all the five regional health authorities, and has raised clinical competence in treating eating disorders.

Treatment shall, if possible, be received on a voluntary basis, in open and normally settings. Increased emphasis has been placed on primary health care service.

Special measures, however, have been given to people with serious eating disorders, requiring coordinated services over a longer period of time. One hospital in each of the five regional health authorities is responsibility for specialised health services to people with eating disorder.

Please provide further information, and in particular statistical data, on the prevalence of STIs including HIV/AIDS among Norwegian women, and trends over the past four years, highlighting in particular the situation among vulnerable groups.

Norway does not have particular statistical data on the prevalence of STI, in conclusion women in Norway get tested more often than men (e.g for T. Chlamydia) and for that reason detection of STIs will be higher among women. For example in 2005 and 2006 approximately 67% of the Chlamydia findings were done among women.

New diagnosed Hiv infection among women 2003-2006:

2006: 91

2005: 97

2004: 103

2003: 93

Source: Norwegian Institute for Public Health

Women represent the vast majority of new diagnosis among those infected with hiv before arrival to Norway. Most of the women come from the conflict areas in Central- and East Africa. The majority of the Asians diagnosed with hiv are women coming to Norway to live with their new, Norwegian husband. On the other hand there is very few diagnoses among women infected while living in Norway.

Networks for hiv positive women have been established. This is a difficult task, especially among immigrant women. Improvements can be seen, but more work needs to be done. Measures to increase the awareness of the role played by men have not however been given sufficient attention.

It is estimated that there are about 2555 women and men working as sex workers in Norway. The majority of sex workers are women. In 2005 the number of street sex workers was 1055, 70% of these being foreign, mainly from Eastern Europe and countries outside Europe with generalized HIV epidemics. 1500 sex workers are registered working on the indoor market – estimated number being 50% foreign. There has been an increase of foreign sex workers working especially in street prostitution from 2003 to 2005. In Oslo the number of foreign sex worker registered at the Pro centre was 644 in 2003 and 1064 in 2005. The number of Norwegian sex workers has decreased from 692 in 2003 to 463 in 2005.

The number of HIV tests taken at the main health clinic for sex workers in Oslo, the Pro centre, increased from 266 in 2004 to 464 in 2005. Based on the HIV findings in these samples, it is estimated that the HIV-prevalence among sex workers in Norway is about 2% in 2005. For 2006 there is a positive decline in all STI diagnoses among sex workers, including hiv infections.

There are a number of different organizations and public institutions working on prevention of HIV and STDs among sex workers in the major cities in Norway. Free condoms and lube, information, education and voluntary counselling and testing are key components in their work. Reaching-out casework and cultural intermediaries are methods being used. These methods have proven to be very successful in getting in contact and dialog with the sex workers both on the indoor market and on the streets. Based on their dialogue with the sex workers, they report

that most sex workers have good knowledge about HIV and STIs and all claim the use of condoms with their clients. The amount of condoms being distributed every year to sex workers indicates an extensive use of condoms.
