



REGERINGSKANSLIET

9 October

**Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality**

*Division for Discrimination Issues*



**Council of Europe**  
Sweden 2008

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## **Rights work!**

**International Conference on Systematic Work  
for Human Rights Implementation  
Stockholm 6 & 7 November 2008**

**Conference organised by Sweden during the Swedish chairmanship of the  
Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe  
(May-November 2008)**

The purpose of the conference is to exchange experiences concerning systematic work for human rights at the national level as well as to give concrete examples and methods on how to implement human rights. Sweden believes that systematic work for human rights contributes to better implementation of human rights standards and in a long term perspective to a decrease of complaints to the European Court of Human Rights.

### **1. Background**

The UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 recommended all states to consider drawing up national action plans in order to identify measures to improve the promotion and protection of human rights. The importance of national action plans was also stressed in the conclusions of the 2007 Council of Europe Forum for Future Democracy in Sweden.

In Sweden's second national action plan for human rights 2006-2009, the government declared its intention to invite other states which have or are thinking of devising national action plans for human rights to a conference on such action plans during 2008.

The conference on systematic work for human rights implementation will be one of the main activities during the Swedish chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe May-November 2008.

## **2. A conference to stimulate systematic work for human rights**

The Government's long-term objective is to ensure full respect for human rights in Sweden, i.e. the full implementation of Sweden's international commitments at all levels of society. Thus, Sweden takes a special interest in methods for working systematically and regularly at the national level towards ensuring full implementation of human rights standards. To ensure full respect for human rights, it is for instance important to conduct regular and comprehensive reviews of the possible problems that exist with regard to the protection of different rights in consultation with civil society. Another key task is to maintain a high level of knowledge and awareness of human rights. It is also essential that efforts to protect and promote human rights are coordinated. Devising national human rights action plans can be one method for working systematically for human rights implementation. Other methods include tools for follow up and evaluation of work for human rights, such as human rights indicators, and ways for consultation and co-operation with NGOs and other parts of civil society.

The ambition of Sweden is to stimulate and contribute to a discussion among governments, international organisations and civil society on different methods for ensuring that the reality within our countries correspond with the rights proclaimed in regional and international standards. It is the hope of the organisers that the conference will provide an opportunity for sharing experiences in this area and be a forum for discussion on future co-operation, both within and beyond the Council of Europe. Discussions regarding possible ways of presenting the conference recommendations are currently taking place. Hosting an international conference on systematic work for human rights implementation is also an extension of Sweden's policy on global development.

## **3. Contents**

The conference will provide a platform for governments, international organisations and civil society to discuss and share experiences from elaborating and applying methods for systematic work for human rights implementation. Attention will be paid to different models and methods of implementation and evaluation as well as accountability.

The conference will focus on four sub themes. Each working group will consist of representatives from various sectors of society (local, regional, NHRIs, NGOs etc.). Each working group will focus on one of the four

sub themes, but topics related to the other sub themes should also be considered. The working groups may include the other themes in their discussions as the themes are interrelated. The number of participants should not exceed 50. The working groups will be led by a moderator and the discussions summarised by a rapporteur. Human rights education should be included as an important aspect of systematic work for human rights implementation. The essential role of civil society will be discussed both as an integral part of all of the sub-themes, as well as a separate sub theme.

Sub-theme 1: National human rights action plans and base line studies

Sub-theme 2: Methods for mainstreaming and following up systematic work for human rights implementation

Sub-theme 3: Systematic work for human rights implementation at the regional and local level

Sub-theme 4: The role of civil society and national human rights institutions in systematic work for human rights implementation

#### **4. Participants**

The number of participants is estimated to 200 including keynote speakers, rapporteurs and moderators.

Experts from member states of the Council of Europe will be invited as well as a number of other states that have a particular interest in systematic work for human rights implementation. Further representatives of the United Nations, the different Council of Europe bodies, the European Union, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe - Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, national human rights institutions and national and international NGOs will also be invited.

#### **5. Documents**

##### **Background document**

The participants will be provided with a background document that will correspond with the themes of the conference. The document will provide information and material for discussion during the conference regarding the experiences of different countries, organisations and other actors from systematic work for human rights. The background document will be produced by the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality with contributions from the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights .

### **Other types of documents**

A list of relevant documents will be supplemented as the preparation of the conference progresses. Documents and reports will be available on the conference website.

### **Final document**

A conference report containing key-note speeches, panel and workshop discussions, and annexes (programme, list of participants etc.) including the background document and conference recommendations will be compiled.

### **6. Dates**

The conference will take place during one and a half days, 6-7 November 2008. The conference **begins at 8.30 am on Thursday 6 November and closes at 2 pm on Friday 7 November.**

### **7. Venue**

Clarion Hotel Sign, Stockholm.

<http://www.clarionsign.com/>

### **8. Organisers**

The conference is organised by the government of Sweden (Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, and Ministry for Foreign Affairs) during the Swedish chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (May-November 2008).

The organisers work in close cooperation with the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights.

### **9. Partners**

- Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights
- Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR)
- The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
- UN (OHCHR, UNDP)

### **10. Language**

The Conference will be conducted in English.

## 11. Dates

24 October: A welcome reception for the Ambassadors in Sweden from, in this context relevant, countries hosted by Minister Sabuni. Sweden's Ambassador at large for Human Rights, as well as other representatives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, will also attend.

5 November: Preparatory meeting in Stockholm (keynote speakers, panelists, moderators and rapporteurs).

5 November: Welcome reception at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs hosted by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs .

6 November: The City of Stockholm and Minister Sabuni host a reception and buffet dinner at *Prinsens galleri* in the Stockholm City Hall.

## 12. Contacts Conference Secretariat

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