



## Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A summary of asylum and refugee-related stories in regional media.

Saturday 29 May to Wednesday 2 June 2010

### Denmark

#### **5 million crowns to send refugee children home**

The government and the Danish People's Party are preparing to contribute with 5 million DKK in development aid to a care centre in Kabul that will provide shelter for many of the unaccompanied Afghan and Iraqi asylum-seeking children who arrive in Denmark every year, only to be sent back home again. Denmark will help finance the Norwegian project, alongside Holland, Sweden and the UK. 542 unaccompanied minor refugee children arrived in Denmark last year, where 392 came from Afghanistan and 33 came from Iraq. Although many have been granted asylum, the government hopes to send those who were only given temporary humanitarian residency permits back to the care centre as soon as it is up and running.

Berlingske Tidende 29 May 2010 p:8 (in Danish)

#### **Refugee children in asylum limbo**

Right now, 75 youths and children who have fled to Denmark are waiting for their asylum procedure to be initiated. Unaccompanied minors must have a personal representative before the authorities begin considering an asylum case, and at the moment there are not enough of representatives. The persons are drawn from volunteers, and they are essential to the process, says project manager at the Danish Red Cross' asylum department, Karen-Inger Thorsen. Thorsen says that the representatives look after the interests and well-being of the child, and that when the minor is interviewed by the Danish Immigration Service and the Police, the representative's role is to ensure that the minor is heard and understood. The Danish Red Cross cannot keep up because there has been an explosive increase in the numbers of unaccompanied minors who seek asylum in Denmark. Last year, 529 unaccompanied minors sought asylum in Denmark. In 2007, that number was 93.

Danmarks Radio 31 May 2010 (in English)

[http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Andre\\_sprog/English/2010/05/31/113010.htm](http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Andre_sprog/English/2010/05/31/113010.htm)

Danmarks Radio 28 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2010/05/28/203656.htm>

### Norway

#### **Asylum-seeker had Securitas guards for DKK 14,000 a day**

An unaccompanied minor asylum-seeker from a country in the Middle East was before Christmas considered to be so dangerous to himself and his surroundings that Torshov

transit center hired security guards from Securitas. The Directorate of Immigration spent nearly NOK 400,000 on security for a month. Director Siri Rustad of UDI says that it is an expensive service when they use it, but that it is used on very few people. Rustad says that they are responsible for ensuring that the centers are a safe, quiet place for all who live there. In this case, the Torshov resident was eventually moved to a reinforced unit at a different center in a different region. In such units, they have additional staff and psychiatric nurses. The Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) believes that many European countries are better than the Norwegian authorities to identify asylum-seekers with special needs in an early stage. Acting Director General Sylo Taraku at NOAS says that you must ensure that such persons are sent for treatment or to the reinforced reception centers so that it does not become a burden for the other residents. Norwegian Directorate of Health says that the guidelines for health care for asylum-seekers are under revision.

Aftenposten 1 June 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article3673356.ece>

## Sweden

### Prosecutor to investigate case of Mir Abbas

A year after his suicide, Mir Abbas Safari was finally laid to rest last Thursday in a churchyard in Gävle. Mir Abbas Safari, a homosexual from Afghanistan, who had sought asylum in Sweden but had his application rejected, committed suicide whilst being held in custody in Gävle prior to deportation. He was held in custody even though he had a history of depression. The UN committee against torture has criticized Sweden several times for keeping people who are to be deported, but who are not suspected of having committed any crime, locked up in a cell 23 hours a day. Last week Amnesty criticized Sweden for the number of suicides committed by deportees who are held in custody. No one will accept any responsibility for the fact that Mir Abbas Safari was able to kill himself, and the case has now been handed over to the public prosecutor.

Dagens Nyheter 29 May 2010 p:36 (in Swedish)

Dagens Nyheter 29 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/nu-ska-aklagare-granska-fallet-1.1113763>

Dagens Nyheter 29 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/mir-abbas-sista-resa-1.1113760>

### Sweden Democrats' shadow budget

The Sweden Democrats presented their first "shadow budget" in Landskrona on Monday. The party wants to save SEK 9.5 billion on aid by shrinking Sweden's aid budget to 0.7% of GDP, and SEK 12.4 billion on immigration in the first year, by reducing immigration for asylum-seekers and next-of-kin by 90% by 2012. This would mean that Sweden would have a lower number of immigrants than both Denmark and Finland.

Dagens Nyheter 1 June 2010 p:18 (in Swedish)

Svenska Dagbladet 1 June 2010 p:14 (in Swedish)

Dagens Nyheter 31 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/politik/sd-minska-bistandet-och-satsa-pa-forsvaret-1.1114575>

Sveriges Radio 31 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=3741895>

### **Swedish Imam accused of terrorist acts**

An imam from Uzbekistan, who has lived in Sweden since he was granted refugee status by the UN, is accused by Uzbekistan's state television for financing and preparing terrorist acts in Uzbekistan. The documentary aired only days after the Swedish Public radio SR reported that the Uzbek secret service is spying on Uzbek refugees in Sweden, and that that the Uzbeks who are returned are imprisoned and tortured. The imam is on Interpol's wanted list.

Sveriges Radio 29 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://sverigesradio.se/sida/gruppsida.aspx?programid=3304&grupp=6240&artikel=3737497>

Sveriges Radio 30 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://mobil.sr.se/site/index.aspx?artikel=3737777&unitid=78&offset=0>

Nyhetskanalen 28 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://www.nyhetskanalen.se/1.1657564/2010/05/28/uzbekistan\\_terrorplaner\\_i\\_sverige](http://www.nyhetskanalen.se/1.1657564/2010/05/28/uzbekistan_terrorplaner_i_sverige)

SVT 28 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://svt.se/2.22620/1.2020558/uzbekistan\\_terrorplanering\\_i\\_sverige?lid=senasteNytt\\_275224&lpos=rubrik\\_2020558](http://svt.se/2.22620/1.2020558/uzbekistan_terrorplanering_i_sverige?lid=senasteNytt_275224&lpos=rubrik_2020558)

### **Future Ambassador critical of orphanage**

Sweden's future ambassador to Afghanistan, Secretary General of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan Torbjörn Pettersson, is highly critical of the Minister of Migration's proposals of opening orphanages in Afghanistan where unaccompanied refugee children can be sent instead of staying in Sweden. The idea behind the orphanages is that children should be able to reunite with their parents, but Torbjörn Pettersson does not believe in this. He says that the problem is that the Afghan government can not ensure public safety, and that is why the refugees are fleeing. The idea that it will be possible to create care centers that would be able to guarantee the safety in this environment feels like a very big and difficult challenge.

Sveriges Radio 29 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://sverigesradio.se/sida/gruppsida.aspx?programid=3304&grupp=6240&artikel=3737472>

### **Deported Burundians are subjects to violence**

Burundi in East Africa is a country characterized by violence and ethnic conflicts. Sweden has chosen to deport Burundians despite the fact that many of them get into serious trouble when they return to their home country. Fredrik Beijer, Director of the Asylum Procedures at the Migration Board, says that Burundi has improved on the political side, but that violence towards individuals still occurs. Beijer says that the new information that recently has emerged is worrying, and that the Migration Board will, with the help of embassies and UNHCR, try to get more information on the situation in Burundi. The Migration Board is currently granting residence permits to about 50 per cent of the persons from Burundi who apply for asylum in Sweden.

Sveriges Radio 31 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=1650&artikel=3739663>

## UNHCR in the news

### **Crises strike hardest among the poor**

Maeve Murphy, UNHCR's field officer at the world's largest refugee camp on the border between Kenya and Somalia, says that the world's interest in Somali refugees is not very big. The 300,000 refugees in the camp have left the neighboring country that has been shaken by civil war for the last 20 years, and the camps are so overcrowded that they are about to collapse. But Murphy does not expect a lot of aid from the outside world since she believes that people are busy trying to save their houses from the bank. On Monday, the World Bank's yearly conference on Development Economics in Stockholm with the theme "Development Challenges in a Post Crisis World" starts.

Svenska Dagbladet 29 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://www.svd.se/naringsliv/nyheter/kriser-slar-hardast-bland-de-fattigaste\\_4784435.svd](http://www.svd.se/naringsliv/nyheter/kriser-slar-hardast-bland-de-fattigaste_4784435.svd)

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## Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A summary of asylum and refugee-related stories in regional media.

Thursday 27 May to Friday 28 May 2010

### Denmark

#### Refugees sent back to Greece

A new Danish Red Cross study of 300 refugees shows that the rights of asylum-seekers are routinely violated in Greece. Despite this, Denmark sends asylum-seekers back to Greece if this was the first EU country they were registered in. Secretary General Anders Ladekarl says that their study clearly demonstrates that asylum-seekers are treated inhumanly in Greece and that Denmark therefore must immediately stop sending asylum-seekers back there. The Dublin Regulation gives Member States the right to handle asylum cases from applicants who first arrived in another EU country. In the case of Greece, the United Nations recommends the use of this opportunity not to send refugees back. But Denmark has since 2006 deported 20 refugees to Greece. On Wednesday afternoon, the Ministry of Integration announced that it will now automatically send asylum-seekers back to Greece, without first checking with Greek authorities, as has been the practice in the past. This has shocked the Danish Red Cross.

Danmarks Radio 27 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2010/05/26/231114.htm>

Danmarks Radio 27 May 2010 (in English)

[http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Andre\\_sprog/English/2010/05/27/113840.htm](http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Andre_sprog/English/2010/05/27/113840.htm)

#### Researcher: Denmark disregarding human rights

Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen, a researcher in refugee and EU asylum policy at the Danish Institute for International Studies says that Denmark could have violated the international conventions, notably the European Convention on Human Rights, by sending asylum-seekers back to Greece. He says that the Dublin Regulation is not something that ranks above human rights. Minister for Integration Birthe Rønn Hornbech explains that the Danish immigration authorities simply follow the EU's quite normal practice.

Danmarks Radio 27 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2010/05/26/114103.htm>

#### Amnesty criticizes Denmark on several points

In 2009, torture occurred in 111 countries, 55 countries were accused of lack of rule of law and in 96 countries, severe limitations on freedom of expression occurred. In Amnesty's annual report, Denmark is criticized for undermining human rights and for failing to fulfill its international obligations towards vulnerable groups in the world. Denmark is criticized for disregarding UN recommendation by forcibly returning asylum-

seekers to Iraq, even though UNHCR has said that asylum-seekers should not be sent back to central Iraq until the security situation has improved.

Politiken 27 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://politiken.dk/indland/article980424.ece>

### **NB. This story was also covered in Norway**

Aftenposten 27 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/article3667136.ece>

Aftenposten 26 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/article3666901.ece>

## **Finland**

### **"Grandmother Laws" next year at the earliest**

Changes to immigration laws that would include grandparents as part of the nuclear family will not come into force until next year at the earliest. This comes much too late for two elderly women who are being deported in June. Pentti Visanen, Director-General of the Migration Department at the Ministry of the Interior, says that as long as Parliament is given the bill for consideration by November, the law could come into force at the beginning of 2011. Earlier this year, the plight of two grandmothers, Eveline Fayadel and Irina Antonova, caught the sympathy of the public and many politicians. They were denied residence permits. Both grandmothers have families living in Finland, and no close relatives in their home country. Visanen says that grandmothers who are now returned back to their home countries could apply for a residence permit again when the amended legislation is in force.

YLE 27 May 2010 (in English)

[http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/quotgrandmother\\_lawsquot\\_next\\_year\\_at\\_the\\_earliest\\_1717420.html](http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/quotgrandmother_lawsquot_next_year_at_the_earliest_1717420.html)

YLE 26 May 2010 (in Finnish)

[http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/talous\\_ja\\_politiikka/2010/05/isoaitien\\_kaannytyslaki\\_eduskuntaan\\_syksylla\\_1713155.html](http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/talous_ja_politiikka/2010/05/isoaitien_kaannytyslaki_eduskuntaan_syksylla_1713155.html)

YLE 27 May 2010 (in Finnish)

[http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/talous\\_ja\\_politiikka/2010/05/isoaitilaki\\_lykkaantyneen\\_ensivuoteen\\_1715674.html](http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/talous_ja_politiikka/2010/05/isoaitilaki_lykkaantyneen_ensivuoteen_1715674.html)

### **Poll: Majority of Finns opposed to more immigrants**

Nearly two thirds of Finns say Finland should not encourage more foreigners to move here, according to a YLE survey. A whopping 82 per cent of True Finns backers were of the same opinion. For Centre Party supporters the number was 70 per cent, while 68 per cent of Social Democratic backers felt the same way. Meanwhile, 45 per cent of backers of the conservative National Coalition Party said they supported more immigration while 53 per cent were opposed. One third of respondents said that immigration would play a significant or very significant role in their voting decisions in the next elections.

YLE 28 May 2010 (in English)

[http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/poll\\_majority\\_of\\_finns\\_opposed\\_to\\_more\\_immigrants\\_1717882.html](http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/poll_majority_of_finns_opposed_to_more_immigrants_1717882.html)

YLE 28 May 2010 (in Finnish)

[http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/talous\\_ja\\_politiikka/2010/05/suomesta\\_ei\\_haluta\\_houkutteleva\\_a\\_maata\\_1717438.html](http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/talous_ja_politiikka/2010/05/suomesta_ei_haluta_houkutteleva_a_maata_1717438.html)

Aamulehti 28 May 2010 (in Finnish)

<http://www.aamulehti.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/ylen-kysely-suomeen-ei-pida-houkutella-ulkomaalaisia/180037>

YLE 28 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://svenska.yle.fi/nyheter/artikel.php?id=187487>

### **NB. This story was also covered in Sweden**

Sveriges Radio 28 May 2010 (in Finnish)

<http://sverigesradio.se/sisuradio/nyheter/artikel.asp?artikel=3732913>

### **Integration programmes unsupervised and unequal**

Finnish language and integration education offered to immigrants varies greatly and lacks any official oversight. Training programmes are technically the purview of both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture. Dual management has led to neither ministry taking responsibility for supervision. The National Board of Education drew up general guidelines for programmes to teach culture and language skills to immigrants, but the Board has no authority to oversee the educational institutions that offer these programmes. This means that every school has the power to broadly interpret what they offer, creating a number of parallel but unequal programmes. One major problem is that while the number of immigrants is increasing, the money earmarked for this area has stayed the same.

YLE 27 May 2010 (in English)

[http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/integration\\_programmes\\_unsupervised\\_and\\_unequal\\_1717343.html](http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/integration_programmes_unsupervised_and_unequal_1717343.html)

### **Oulu Police reach out to refugees**

Police in Oulu have launched a programme to reach out to new refugees, especially youth. Police officials admit it is something they should have started a long time ago. The idea is to invite young refugees to education sessions where police can explain some legal and social issues and the role of police. Chief Investigative Officer Jouko Autio says that at the lectures, the police simply go through Finnish life and laws, that is, how to live in Finland and how committing crimes could affect their residence and so forth. He adds that the police feel these training sessions are necessary and that it is important to explain to persons from different backgrounds for example what a sexual crime is and the position of women in Finland.

YLE 27 May 2010 (in English)

[http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/oulu\\_police\\_reach\\_out\\_to\\_refugees\\_1716955.html](http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/oulu_police_reach_out_to_refugees_1716955.html)

## **Norway**

### **Progress Party: - To ease the identification requirement is stupid**

In a new proposal, the UDI says that asylum-seekers should be able to obtain a work permit if it takes more than three months for UDI and the police to establish their identity. The Progress Party fears that foreign criminals and terrorists will take advantage of more liberal regulations. Acting Secretary General Sylo Taraku at the Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers says that some are waiting for answers on their

applications for years, and that although the police are not hundred per cent sure who someone is, it would be better if the applicant could provide for himself instead of living on government money during this time. The Secretary General of Amnesty International says that the possibility of working is one of the most important measures of countering passivity, poor mental / physical health, preventing the transition to the black labor market and other forms of illegal activity among asylum-seekers.

Aftenposten 26 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article3666005.ece>

Aftenposten 26 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article3666235.ece>

### **Storberget on Sinsen reception center**

Knut Storberget does not believe that the new reception center at Sinsen becomes more troublesome for the community than the current transit reception center.

Residents in the area have reacted very strongly against the decision to move the reception center from Tanum to Sinsen at end of the year. Storberget believes that the reception center should be centrally located in Oslo, since this will enable a faster processing of asylum applications. He also says that by moving the reception center, its proximity to the Directorate of Immigration (UDI) and the police immigration unit will be ensured. The Progress Party's Christian Tybring-Gjedde wants Storberget to prevent the move of the reception center to Sinsen, saying that Tanum has been close enough to UDI and that the reception center has been successful.

NRK 26 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/ostlandssendingen/1.7140077>

### **- Lack of rule of law in UNE**

The Norwegian Bar Association's action and procedure group has assisted 19 rejected asylum-seekers through court cases, of which 12 rejections have been reversed.

Leader of the action group, lawyer Arild Humlen, says the results so far show that UNE does not work from a legal perspective. He adds that there is an urgent need for strengthening the rule of law in UNE, and that the current situation is not satisfactory.

Aftenposten 26 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article3665242.ece>

### **Oslo police harsh on asylum-seekers dealing drugs**

Asylum-seekers who are engaged in crime in Norway damage the country's reputation, according to the Oslo police, which urge politicians to act. Kåre Stølen from the police says that these persons are abusing the Norwegian asylum system and ruin chances for others who really are in need of asylum. Since January, the Oslo police have caught 401 asylum-seekers for drug dealing. These account for over 650 cases. Stølen adds that the police have no means to keep these persons in custody and instead end up using resources on them which could be used for children and young persons in the area.

Verdens Gang 28 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/artikkel.php?artid=10007675>

## Sweden

### Migration Board shortcomings in LGBT issues

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons seeking asylum in Sweden can receive different decisions on their asylum claims, depending on the person in charge of the case. Two reports show that the Migration Board lacks a clear picture of what the situation for LGBT persons looks like in different countries. There is a lack of quality information, and the information available is general, vague, and based on few and outdated sources.

Sveriges Radio 27 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://sverigesradio.se/sida/Artikel.aspx?ProgramId=83&artikel=3728966>

Dagens Nyheter 28 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/hbt-kritik-mot-migrationsverket-1.1112728>

### No collective punishment of refugee children used

According to an investigation by the social welfare board, there was no collective punishment used in the residences of unaccompanied minors in Östersund. However, the investigation shows that there is a confidence gap between the refugee children and the leadership, a gap the investigator Jan-Erik Nilsson believes is due to the children's changing situation. He notes that they have had adult roles in the countries they come from and now they become children again and have to adjust to a collective system.

Sveriges Television 26 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://svt.se/2.55755/1.2017266/utskriftsvanligt\\_format](http://svt.se/2.55755/1.2017266/utskriftsvanligt_format)

### Unemployment benefit – a carrot

Green Party member Mikaela Valtersson heads the working group that has been tasked by the government to study ways to facilitate circular migration, making it easier for non-EU migrant workers to move freely in and out of Sweden. The report proposes that migrant workers and persons who have been granted asylum in Sweden should be entitled to a larger share of the Swedish social security system, even if they return to their home countries.

Svenska Dagbladet 28 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/a-kassa-lockbete-for-invandrare\\_4779749.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/a-kassa-lockbete-for-invandrare_4779749.svd)

### Proposal to waive visa requirement

The European Commission yesterday adopted proposals to enable citizens of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina to travel with biometric passports to the Schengen countries without requiring visas. The proposal aims to simplify travel to EU countries (except the UK and Ireland) and to Switzerland, Norway and Iceland (non-EU members of the Schengen area). Last December the EU waived the visa requirement for citizens of Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro. However, visa requirements remained in place for citizens from Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina as neither country met the criteria set by Brussels at that time. Since then significant progress has been made by both countries in improving passport security, strengthening border controls and reinforcing the institutional framework to fight organized crime and corruption.

Dagens Nyheter 28 May 2010 p:27 (in Swedish)

### NB. This story was also covered in Denmark

Jyllands-Posten 27 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://jp.dk/udland/europa/article2080541.ece>

## Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Tuesday 25 May to Wednesday 26 May 2010

### Denmark

#### **DF goes after foreigners in negotiations**

Danish People's Party are in negotiations with the government over the savings plan that is supposed to strengthen the treasury by 24 billion Danish crowns. They propose that refugees should not automatically receive full state pension and that the pension should be calculated according to how long they have been in Denmark, that foreigners themselves must pay for interpreters in schools, hospitals and in municipalities, introducing fees on residence permits and visas, and that Denmark should stop receiving quota refugees. Danish People's Party's treasurer Kristian Thulesen Dahl rejects the accusations that the DF has launched a hunt to cut public benefits for foreigners, he merely believes that the proposal makes up for the fact that foreigners have previously received too much.

Jyllands-Posten 24 May 2010 (in Danish)

[http://jp.dk/indland/indland\\_politik/article2076995.ece](http://jp.dk/indland/indland_politik/article2076995.ece)

#### **Medical Association: DF-proposal can have serious consequences**

Mads Koch Hansen, chairman of the Medical Association fears that the Danish People's Party might be breaking the health law if they would deprive foreigners of free interpretation at hospitals and in municipalities. He says that the health law says that you must have easy and equal access to health care, and that by removing the interpreters, it may be a barrier, which means that you break the law. He also says that it is important that messages are understood correctly by the patient so that the doctor may say that there has been an informed consent. The proposal from the Danish People's Party is a part of the savings plan, which the government expects will be negotiated on Tuesday.

Politiken 24 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://politiken.dk/politik/article978719.ece>

#### **DF gets some of their wishes fulfilled**

Danish People's Party (DF) has on many occasions proposed to cut foreign aid and child allowances. It is now a reality. Less aid to developing countries and a limit to the money for children will save 2.4 billion crowns in 2013. Since a majority of the families with non-Western parents have more children than families with two Danish parents, this change will mostly affect immigrants and refugees. DF also got its way with savings on interpreters, which should result in savings of 15 million crowns in 2013, as well as the possibility of health care fees for foreigners which would result in savings of 82 million crowns. DF also proposed that refugees would no longer automatically receive

the full state pension. The pension should instead be given according to how many years the refugees has lived in Denmark. Evaluation work is now underway to look at the opportunity of changing the pensions for refugees. However, Peter Skaarup's wish of stopping the reception of quota refugees was rejected.

Jyllands-Posten 25 May 2010 (in Danish)

[http://jp.dk/indland/indland\\_politik/article2078090.ece](http://jp.dk/indland/indland_politik/article2078090.ece)

Jyllands-Posten 25 May 2010 (in Danish)

[http://jp.dk/indland/indland\\_politik/article2078018.ece](http://jp.dk/indland/indland_politik/article2078018.ece)

## Finland

### **Groznyi Angel's asylum application will get new examination**

The Immigration Service is to re-examine the case of the "Groznyi Angel" Khadizhat Gatajeva and her husband. The Gatajevs have applied for asylum in Finland claiming they are persecuted in Lithuania, where they have been indicted for crimes related to orphanages that they have been running in the Chechen capital Groznyi and in Lithuania. Human rights organisations suspect that the case has political motives. The Gatajevs' application was denied in March 2010, but now the Helsinki Administrative Court has ordered the case to be looked at again. The Immigration Service will either do this, or apply for a permit appeal. The decision is not public. Meanwhile, the Gatajevs' case is to be retried in Lithuania, but even if they are freed, they are not safe in the country, according to Teemu Matinpuro who is part of a support group for the couple. YLE 25 May 2010 (in Finnish)

[http://yle.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/2010/05/quotgroznyin\\_enkeliquot\\_kielteinen\\_turvapaikkap\\_aatos\\_kasitellaan\\_uudelleen\\_1710438.html](http://yle.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/2010/05/quotgroznyin_enkeliquot_kielteinen_turvapaikkap_aatos_kasitellaan_uudelleen_1710438.html)

### **Police to go ahead with Grandmother deportations**

National Police Commissioner Mikko Paatero believes that the highly-publicized deportation of an Egyptian grandmother, Eveline Fadayel, will go ahead as planned. Her deportation was suspended as the government considered amending immigration laws, but Paatero now says that authorities can wait no longer for reforms. The government has said it would consider reforms to legislation that would allow immigration officials to consider extenuating humanitarian circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Paatero says that if new legislation were to come before summer it may change the situation, but that this is unlikely. Paatero stressed that police have to obey the laws, and that not even the Supreme Police Command can overturn a deportation. Helsinki Police will also continue the implementation of a deportation order against Russian grandmother, Irina Antonova. Under current Finnish immigration laws, grandmothers cannot be granted residence permits as they are not classed as being part of the immediate family.

Minister for Immigration Astrid Thors admitted that any legal change would take time. Earlier she had hoped legislation could have been amended before this summer.

Russian media has criticized Finland severely. The issue will probably be discussed as Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin visits Finland later this week.

YLE 25 May 2010 (in English)

[http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/police\\_re-instate\\_deportation\\_of\\_egyptian\\_and\\_russian\\_grandmothers\\_1708213.html?print=true](http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/police_re-instate_deportation_of_egyptian_and_russian_grandmothers_1708213.html?print=true)

YLE 25 May 2010 (in English)

[http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/russian\\_media\\_criticises\\_finland\\_over\\_deportation\\_1710756.html](http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/russian_media_criticises_finland_over_deportation_1710756.html)

## Norway

### **UDI want to give work permits to asylum-seeker with undocumented identities**

The Directorate of Immigration (UDI) proposes new guidelines that would make it possible to grant work permits to asylum-seekers with undocumented identities in cases where the UDI and the police use more than three months to establish their identity. Director Svein Oppegaard of NHO says that in their view, it is not advisable for any employer to employ workers without knowing their identity. Attorney Kurt Westlien at the NHO says that they believe that the identity must be determined before starting work to make sure that you do not end up in a situation where people are starting to work with a fake identity, and the employer runs into problems with for example payment of salaries at a later stage. In UDI's proposal, it is up to the asylum-seekers who have received a final rejection to notify their workplace.

Verdens Gang 26 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/artikkel.php?artid=10007409>

Aftenposten 26 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article3664372.ece>

### **Conservative Party: Norway should consider cutting the aid to Eritrea**

Eritreans protest today against the regime in Eritrea. Between 30 and 40 persons protested against the President Isaias Afwerki, who by experts in Eritrea is described as a dictator. He has imprisoned thousands persons for their political views without charges or trial. The protesters demands that the president should be prosecuted for war crimes. Eritreans in Norway are blackmailed into paying an annual 2 percent tax on all income, to the country they fled from. Family and friends in Eritrea are in risk of being fined or harassed if the tax is not paid. Torbjørn Røe Isaksen from the Conservative Party says that Norway should reconsider the aid of nearly 60 million that the government donates to Eritrea every year. Røe Isaksen says that it must be clear that if Norway can not demand that Eritrean authorities respect human rights and legal protection to people who stay in Norway, he says that he thinks it must also have consequences for development assistance to the country.

NRK 25 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/verden/1.7138633>

### **60 asylum-seekers live with mould in the ceiling and polluted drinking water**

The persons in charge of Vaterholmen reception center in Verdal have been given a week to improve the living conditions at the center if they want to avoid fines or closure of it. There is mould in the ceilings and walls in the shower, the condition in the kitchen is unsanitary, the indoor air quality is very poor, and there is e-coli bacteria in the drinking water. These things were all pointed out in a report as early as in the beginning of April. A municipality doctor concludes that the old military barrack is unsuitable as a home for people. In March, the Directorate for Immigration (UDI) monitored the reception center in Verdal without visiting the controversial camp in Vaterholmen. After meetings with the employees, it was concluded that "the residents of the reception center are well taken care of." Acting Regional Director of UDI, Mette Moen Baatvik,

does not believe a physical inspection would have made them reach different conclusions in the report.

Dagbladet 25 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.dagbladet.no/2010/05/25/nyheter/asylmottak/innenriks/asylpolitikk/udi/11859719/>

## Sweden

### 16-year-old charged with arson

A 16-year-old boy has been charged in Värmland District Court for arson or alternative vandalism after having started a fire at a housing for unaccompanied minor refugees in Filipstad. The incident occurred in January when the boy set fire to his clothes in his room. The staff managed to evacuate the housing, so no one got hurt. The prosecutor, however, claims that the fire was endangering another's life and caused extensive destruction. The boy admitted that he started the fire.

Dagens Nyheter 24 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/16-arig-atalad-for-mordbrand-1.1110772>

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UNHCR bears no responsibility for the accuracy and content of the press summary, which is based on external news services and does not reflect the views of UNHCR.

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## Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A summary of asylum and refugee-related stories in regional media.

Saturday 22 May to Monday 24 May 2010

### Denmark

#### **DF will save money on quota refugees**

Before going into negotiations with the government over the recovery plan where 24 billion Danish crowns has to be saved, the Danish People's Party said that Denmark can save money if the country stops accepting 500 quota refugees every year and instead focuses more on the refugees that are already in Denmark. According to Peter Skaarup from the Danish People's Party, the government will save billions in expenses that they are now spending on immigrants and refugees that do not work as much as the Danes.

Politiken 22 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://politiken.dk/politik/article977788.ece>

Danmarks Radio 22 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Politik/2010/05/22/133947.htm>

#### **DF will reduce pensions for refugees**

On Monday's talk on the recovery plan, the Danish People's Party proposed to cut retirement opportunities for refugees. Today, refugees are automatically eligible for the maximum pension at retirement age, regardless of how long they have been living in Denmark. Others must have lived in Denmark for the last 40 years to receive the maximum amount. Otherwise you will be paid a fraction of your pension. Danish People's Party's social spokesperson Martin Henriksen says that refugees should be treated in the same way, and subject to the same rules, as the Danes and other immigrant groups are.

Jyllands-Posten 24 May 2010 (in Danish)

[http://jp.dk/indland/indland\\_politik/article2076774.ece](http://jp.dk/indland/indland_politik/article2076774.ece)

TV2 Lorry 24 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://www.tv2lorry.dk/moduler/tv2nyheder/Default.asp?id=%0D%0A%09%09%09%09%09%09%09%09%0930739534>

#### **Denmark pays for an empty house in Nigeria**

Each year, Denmark pays thousands of dollars for a house in Nigeria, where victims of trafficking can hide. However, a so-called safe house in Benin City in Nigeria is completely deserted. According to the site's neighbors, it has been empty for a long time. A report from the Norwegian Research Institute for Working life and Welfare has previously suggested that there are no women in the houses, but Denmark continued to pay for it. Last year, Danish authorities identified 54 women who were victims of trafficking. Approximately half of these women come from Nigeria and were sent back

either forcibly or voluntarily. The UN has previously advised against the return of women to Nigeria since both integration authorities and the police there have problems with corruption. This means that a proportion of trafficked women who are sent to Nigeria will return to the hands of the traffickers.

TV2 Lorry 23 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://www.tv2lorry.dk/moduler/tv2nyheder/Default.asp?id=%0D%0A%09%09%09%09%09%09%09%0930663168>

## Finland

### Fadayel is encouraged to travel back home

Eveline Fadayel, an Egyptian grandmother who has applied for a residence permit in Finland and has received two negative decisions, has been encouraged to buy a plane ticket and fly home. Her entire family lives in Finland, but she does not meet the requirements for family reunification according to the Finnish Aliens Act. She was to be deported earlier this year but the action was suspended since there was discussion on a potential change in the law that would have allowed her to stay.

Helsingin Sanomat 21 May 2010 (in Finnish)

<http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/artikkeli/Poliisi+kehotti+egyptil%C3%A4isiso%C3%A4iti%C3%A4+ostamaan+menolipun/1135257066689>

Hufvudstadsbladet 21 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://www.hbl.fi/text/inrikes/2010/5/24/w47417.php>

## Sweden

### Swedes more tolerant of immigrants

A newly released report from the SOM Institute at Gothenburg University indicates that Swedes have become more positive towards immigrants and the reception of refugee over the years. The survey, conducted in the autumn of 2009, shows that 36% of Swedes think that there are too many foreigners living in Sweden. In 1993 the figure was 52%. Urbanites, women and young people are the ones that are the most positive towards immigrants. Professor Marie Demker says that despite attempts by groups such as the Sweden Democrats to stir opposition to immigration, these groups are still a peripheral subculture. The survey has also shown that Moderate voters are the most skeptical towards foreigners (38%) while Green Party voters are the least skeptical (20%).

Dagens Nyheter 24 May 2010 p:4 (in Swedish)

Svenska Dagbladet 24 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/svenskar-positivare-till-invandrare\\_4759139.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/svenskar-positivare-till-invandrare_4759139.svd)

Sveriges Television 24 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://svt.se/2.22620/1.2012654/svenskar\\_positivare\\_till\\_invandring?lid=senasteNytt\\_1765014&lpos=rubrik\\_2012654](http://svt.se/2.22620/1.2012654/svenskar_positivare_till_invandring?lid=senasteNytt_1765014&lpos=rubrik_2012654)

NB. This item was also covered in Finland.

Hufvudstadsbladet 24 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://www.hbl.fi/text/utrikes/2010/5/24/w47414.php>

Iltalehti 24 May 2010 (in Finnish)

[http://www.iltalehti.fi/ulkomaat/2010052411721859\\_ul.shtml](http://www.iltalehti.fi/ulkomaat/2010052411721859_ul.shtml)

### **Party ditches candidate over pro-immigrant views**

The nationalist Sweden Democrat party has excluded a candidate from election to the local council in Ljusdal in eastern Sweden after the politician expressed support for a refugee reception center in the town. Fredrik Hansson was the Sweden Democrats' sole candidate for election to Ljusdal's council until his comments led local leaders in Gävleborg county to withdraw the party's candidacy in the town. Sweden Democrat's county chairman Roger Hedlund says that Hansson's remarks contradict the party's programme. Fredrik Hansson says that the decision is ridiculous, and argues that further immigration is necessary if Sweden wants to cope with the problems associated with an ageing population.

The Local 22 May 2010 (in English)

<http://www.thelocal.se/26794/20100522/>

Svenska Dagbladet 22 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/sd-kandidat-petad-for-sina-asikter\\_4752487.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/sd-kandidat-petad-for-sina-asikter_4752487.svd)

### **Södertälje - a society in society**

In Södertälje, the ethnic segregation is so severe that there now is an Iraqi society within society. The municipality has long tried to encourage Iraqi refugees to move to other municipalities, but many of those who have done it moved back. Since the war in Iraq started in 2003, 7,000 Iraqis have moved to Södertälje. They live in the same areas, they often work together and they socialize mostly with each other. Evin Cetin, political secretary in Södertälje says that it creates a sense of exclusion, where people do not feel involved in the Swedish society, and that it creates a society where children do not meet a single ethnic Swede and it is enough that one can only speak Arabic.

SVT 21 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://svt.se/2.22620/1.2004610/sodertalje\\_-\\_ett\\_samhalle\\_i\\_samhallet](http://svt.se/2.22620/1.2004610/sodertalje_-_ett_samhalle_i_samhallet)

### **Uzbek refugees are tortured after deportation**

When being returned or returning to Uzbekistan, asylum-seekers are accused of and sentenced for having campaigned against the Uzbek regime and for seeking asylum. The Uzbek security services has engaged in extensive espionage of Uzbek refugees in Sweden. The espionage results in the imprisonment and the torture of the Uzbek asylum-seekers who return home or are deported.

Sveriges Radio 24 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://mobil.sr.se/site/index.aspx?artikel=3718029&unitid=83>

### **Introduces bonus to SFI students**

The controversial experiment to give bonuses to immigrants and refugees who quickly finish their studies in Swedish will now be implemented everywhere, despite the fact that it has been widely criticized and has not been evaluated. The bonus system was tested in the SFI education in 13 municipalities.

Sveriges Radio 21 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=128&artikel=3715153>



## Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A summary of asylum and refugee-related stories in regional media.

Thursday 20 May to Friday 21 May 2010

### Denmark

#### **Grandparents nominated for UN Award**

SOS Against Racism in Denmark has nominated Grandparents for Asylum (Bedsteforældre for Asyl) for the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR's international award, the Nansen Award. A committee will decide who will receive the prize. The Nansen Award is given every year in October and consists of an honorary medal and \$100,000. The money will be used to help asylum-seekers and refugees in cooperation with UNHCR. Nansen Award is given to a person or organization in recognition of an exceptional and dedicated assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers. SOS Against Racism says that the Grandparents for Asylum should receive the award since they, for example, on every Sunday for over two years have stood in front of the asylum centers Sandholm, Avnstrup and Kongelunden to protest against Denmark's treatment of asylum-seekers. The Grandparents for Asylum are moved by the nomination.

Sjællands Nyheder 20 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://www.sn.dk/Bedsteforaeldre-nomineret-til-FN-pris/Alleroed/artikel/62022>

Sjællands Nyheder 21 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://www.sn.dk/Bedsteforaeldre-roert-over-indstilling/Alleroed/artikel/62120>

### Norway

#### **Shut down Senjehesten reception center**

Senjehesten reception center in Senja will be shut down because of the decreasing number of asylum-seekers that are coming to Norway, and because the Directorate of Immigration is not satisfied with the operator. The reception center has been criticized for poor living conditions and the very long distance to the nearest town.

NRK 19 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

[http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/troms\\_og\\_finnmark/1.7130638](http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/troms_og_finnmark/1.7130638)

#### **Kristiansand the best on settlement and integration of refugees**

Kristiansand is the winner of the Directorate for Integration and Diversity's (IMDi) 2010 settlement prize. Last year, Kristianstad distinguished themselves by helping unaccompanied minor refugees. Audun Lysbakken says that there was an urgent need to settle unaccompanied minors last year, and Kristiansand developed new standard for flexibility in their settlement efforts. 606 unaccompanied children and young people were moving to municipalities last year. Kristiansand received 46 of them, and settled all within three months.

Agderavisen 20 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://agderavisen.com/article.php?story=20100520125331957>

## Sweden

### Christian Iraqi to be deported

A 20-year-old Iraqi male who lives in Värmdö will be deported, even though UNHCR advises against deportations to Baghdad. Local municipality politicians across the political field have come together to protest against the deportation. Minister for Migration and Asylum Policy Tobias Billström said in a debate on Swedish radio that if the Migration Court rules that an individual does not have sufficient reasons for asylum, he should, regardless of where he comes from, be deported. The reporter commented that UNHCR does not think that Christian Iraqis should be deported to Baghdad or the central parts of Iraq, asking why Sweden makes a different assessment. Billström replied that UNHCR, following its mandate, can make broad collective assessments, whereas the Swedish system is based on a legally certain individual assessment. According to Billström, UNHCR can make a statement concerning a whole region, but the Swedish system is built on the opposite approach, i.e. the individual and the protection needs of the individual. He also said that he has visited Baghdad, and knows that some of the minorities experience great difficulties, which is why some Christian Iraqis are granted asylum.

Sveriges Radio 21 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=1650&artikel=3712641>

### Stieg Larsson Prize awarded

The Stieg Larsson prize of SEK 200,000 was awarded Anne Sjögren. The prize is the second Stieg Larsson Award and was awarded Sjögren for her earnest efforts to provide care for paperless refugees. The jury says that Sjögren has through her longstanding commitment to the Rosengrenska Foundation "shown great courage and vigorously defended human rights."

Norran 19 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://norran.se/nyheter/norrochvasterbotten/article1040329.ece>

### Sweden proposes immigrant orientation

The government has proposed that newly arrived immigrants should undergo courses in core values of society and be taught about how Swedish society works. Erik Amnå, professor of Political Science, says that without knowledge of fundamental societal values an important prerequisite to be able to live and work in Sweden is missing. Amnå, whose proposal has been presented to the integration minister Nyamko Sabuni, suggests that the courses should be divided into three key areas - values (the constitutional foundations), the welfare state (public institutions), and everyday life (practical applied knowledge of how the welfare state works). Erik Amnå proposes that municipalities should be instructed to offer 60 hours of schooling to each new immigrant or refugee.

SVT Rapport 20 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://svt.se/2.22620/1.2009266/invandrare\\_ska\\_lara\\_sig\\_om\\_svenska\\_varderingar?lid=senasteNytt\\_275216&lpos=rubrik\\_2009266](http://svt.se/2.22620/1.2009266/invandrare_ska_lara_sig_om_svenska_varderingar?lid=senasteNytt_275216&lpos=rubrik_2009266)

The Local 20 May 2010 (in English)

<http://www.thelocal.se/26742/20100520/>

### **The government criticizes the red-green migration policy**

According to the government's calculations, the red-green's draft on migration policy costs up to four billions more than more than was stated in the autumn budget proposal. During the Green Party congress last weekend, it was decided that the party will go to the polls on the issue of amnesty for paperless refugees. This is an issue that the Left Party also sees as important. Migration Minister Billström says that the government does not want to see any amnesty reforms. He says that it would substantially undermine the policy and result in a system where people can come here and say 'hey, here I am and I want to stay here.' He says that Sweden's asylum system should be open to the people who actually have a need for protection and not for persons with other reasons.

SVT 21 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://svt.se/2.128339/1.2009737/regeringen\\_sagar\\_de\\_rodgronas\\_migrationspolitik](http://svt.se/2.128339/1.2009737/regeringen_sagar_de_rodgronas_migrationspolitik)

## **UNHCR in the news**

### **Students on the run in Horndal**

On Wednesday, students from Johan Olov School in Horndal got a small glimpse of what it is like to be a refugee who is forced to flee from war and persecution. Connexion, a three-year integration project at the school, organized role-playing game called "the Escape". The game is a reworked version of an role-playing game created by the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR. When fleeing from the war, the students were robbed by unknown criminals, one student was shot, and several refugees were abducted by paramilitary units that were raging in border areas. Staff from the Swedish United Nations Association, the Red Cross, the Swedish Church and the Home Guard participated in role play. A group of pupils at the school have been involved in preparing it, together with the project manager for Connexion. The project is funded by the Inheritance Fund.

SVT 19 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://svt.se/2.33557/1.2007909/elever\\_pa\\_flykt\\_i\\_horndal?lid=senasteNytt\\_1709147&pos=rubrik\\_2007909](http://svt.se/2.33557/1.2007909/elever_pa_flykt_i_horndal?lid=senasteNytt_1709147&pos=rubrik_2007909)

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## Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A summary of asylum and refugee-related stories in regional media.

Tuesday 18 May to Wednesday 19 May 2010

### Denmark

#### **Fewer repatriate despite of increase in monetary bonuses**

The latest figures from the Danish Refugee Council show a marked decline over the past few years in the number of refugees, along with those in the country per family reunification guidelines, who have returned to their native countries. Despite the considerable increase in the monetary bonuses offered to them by the state, only 70 have returned to their homelands so far this year. This is far fewer than the parties behind the government's repatriation programme expected. In November last year, the Liberal-Conservative government and the Danish People's Party (DF) passed a proposal to raise the amount accompanying repatriation from just over 28,000 kroner per person to up to 117,581 kroner during the period of 2010 to 2013. It was the DF that pushed for the change, arguing that it would inevitably save Danish society millions of kroner. But if the trend from the first four and half months remains consistent for the rest of the year, only about 200 foreigners will return home in 2010. That figure would be less than in previous years, with the exception of 2007.

Jyllands-Posten 17 May 2010 (in English)

<http://www.cphpost.dk/news/national/88-national/48993-refugees-scoffing-at-home-return-bonus.html>

TV2 Lorry 17 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://www.tv2lorry.dk/moduler/tv2nyheder/default.asp?id=30602926&>

#### **Every other granted asylum**

Every other applicant is granted asylum in Denmark. A significantly larger number of those who are granted asylum are first-time applicants. The Danish People's Party (DF) integration spokesman Peter Skaarup wants an explanation for these figures from the Minister of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs. In 2004 only 10 per cent were granted asylum, and the Minister of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs Birthe Rønn Hornbech (Liberal Party) sees this as a sign that less apply if they do not really need asylum.

Danmarks Radio 18 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2010/05/18/055304.htm>

#### **Asylum approval level up**

The Liberal-Conservative government's stricter immigration policies have not led to fewer applicants for asylum being granted legal residency, and the percentage of those being approved is at its highest level since 2001, according to figures from Immigration

Service and the Ministry for Integration. In all, 44 percent of processed applications were approved by Immigration Service and a further 30 percent were approved on appeal to the Migration Court. Under the Social Democrat-led government in 2001, 53 percent of processed applications were approved by the Immigration Service. The following year under the new Liberal-led government, only 10 percent of applications were successful.

The Copenhagen Post 18 May 2010 (in English)

<http://www.cphpost.dk/news/politics/90-politics/49005-asylum-approval-level-up.html>

## Norway

### 'Return to Greece immoral'

Director of the Health Directorate of Greece appeals to Norway not to return asylum-seekers to Greece under Dublin II. 1,500 asylum-seekers are pending such return from Norway. Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) is considering starting a reception center in Greece for unaccompanied minors. Secretary General Petter Eide of NPA says that returning to Greece means that Norway is renouncing its legal obligations and that this is very serious. State Secretary Paal Lønnsseth stresses that we need common solutions and that Norway cannot do all alone. He also says that the country is only doing like the rest of Europe. Meanwhile Norway is advocating for a better burden sharing mechanism than what Dublin II allows for today. Geir J Baekkevoll from the Christian Democratic Party (KrF) notes that Norway is hiding behind the rest of Europe and that the situation is bound to get even worse in Greece. He adds that returning asylum-seekers to a country which lacks a functioning asylum system will result in rights not being met, which is immoral in his view.

NRK Radio P2 'Politisk kvarter' 12.5 kl 07.45 (in Norwegian)

[http://www.nrk.no/programmer/sider/politisk\\_kvarter/](http://www.nrk.no/programmer/sider/politisk_kvarter/)

### Asks Støre for help to get around the Israeli blockade

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) asks Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre for help to get around the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip. Israel threatens to halt an emergency shipment of Norwegian school gear that is now on its way. Secretary General Elisabeth Rasmusson writes in a letter to Støre that it is urgent to find alternative solutions to the current situation, and that the majority of the population of 1.5 million people continues to suffer due to acute shortage of food, drinking water, health care, education, electricity and shelter. NRC and other Norwegian aid organizations are not participating in the convoy of ships which are now on their way to the Gaza Strip, but would like to team up with Norwegian authorities and the UN before they challenge the Israeli blockade. Rasmusson recently visited the Gaza Strip and discussed this with the head of the UN relief organization for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), John Ginger. Rasmusson also discussed sea transport of supplies with the UN emergency relief coordinator John Holmes and several other key UN players.

Dagsavisen 18 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.dagsavisen.no/utenriks/article485970.ece>

### Nordbybråten reception center will be shut down

After many years of turbulence surrounding the reception center Nordbybråten, it will now be closed. After a series of violent episodes and thefts, it all culminated with the so-called Chechen fight in 2008. 23 people were seriously injured and more than 50

were indicted in the case that received major national attention. The center is closed since there has been a reduced need for places. Today there are about 70 persons staying at the reception center. These will move to other centers.

Moss Avis 19 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.moss-avis.no/nyheter/nordbybraten-transitmottak-legges-ned-1.5268898>

### **Eritreans in Norway are forced to pay taxes to the country they fled from**

All Eritreans have to pay an annual 2 per cent income tax to Eritrea. If they do not pay they are refused to repatriate or visit their families. There are also examples of incidences where relatives have been harassed and imprisoned when their relatives in Norway did not pay their tax. A representative of the Eritrean embassy in Scandinavia denies that there are any consequences for Eritreans who do not want to pay the 2 per cent tax.

NRK 18 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/verden/1.7128324>

## **Sweden**

### **Sweden orders return of 16-year-old to Malta**

Yesterday the Swedish border police in Malmö remanded a 16-year-old asylum-seeking Somali boy in custody. The boy was to be deported to a refugee camp in Malta as of this morning. Cecilia Malmström, the EU commissioner for home affairs, considers that the conditions for asylum-seekers in Malta are appalling, and that the country is in breach of the rights that minor asylum-seekers have. Yesterday a fire broke out in the renowned airplane hangar where many underage asylum-seekers are placed. DN writes that the Swedish Migration Board has said that it would welcome a review by the Migration Court of Appeal to see if Sweden could make exemption to the so-called Dublin Regulation and allow the underage asylum-seekers to have their claims tried in Sweden.

Dagens Nyheter 18 May 2010 p:13 (in Swedish)

Sveriges Television 17 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://svt.se/2.22584/1.2005052/15-aring\\_avvisas\\_till\\_nedbrant\\_flyktinglager?lid=senasteNytt\\_1447662&lpos=rubrik\\_2005052](http://svt.se/2.22584/1.2005052/15-aring_avvisas_till_nedbrant_flyktinglager?lid=senasteNytt_1447662&lpos=rubrik_2005052)

### **Continued criticism of deportations to Malta**

On Tuesday, a 15-year-old Somali boy was sent back to Malta from Malmö. The deportation occurred despite the fact that the refugee camp had burned down, leaving 400 refugees homeless.

SVT 18 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://svt.se/2.33782/1.2006332/fortsatt\\_kritik\\_mot\\_maltaavvisningar?lid=senasteNytt\\_1851294&lpos=rubrik\\_2006332](http://svt.se/2.33782/1.2006332/fortsatt_kritik_mot_maltaavvisningar?lid=senasteNytt_1851294&lpos=rubrik_2006332)

### **Cooperation to stop SD**

A study conducted by Sveriges Radio shows that three out of four politicians are willing to form a majority across block boundaries to stop the Sweden Democrats (SD).

Nevertheless, 14 per cent of the respondents cannot imagine shutting out the Sweden Democrats this way. The study included more than 1,100 politicians.

Dagens Nyheter 17 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/valet2010/samarbete-for-att-stoppa-sd-1.1098803>

### **Swedish Public Employment Service to take responsibility from municipalities**

The municipalities in Sweden are in charge of the reception of newly arrived refugees. But now Parliament has decided that starting from this winter the Swedish Public Employment Service is to take the primary responsibility over newly arrived refugees. Municipalities will continue to work to find housing and with refugee children and young persons.

Sveriges Radio 17 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=161&artikel=3702919>

### **Quota refugee policy**

The European Parliament has approved a proposal whereby EU countries that receive quota refugees (people whom the UNHCR has mandated as being in particular need of help) are to be offered up to 6,000 euros per refugee from the common EU budget.

At the moment there are only some ten countries including Sweden that have programmes for the resettlement of quota refugees.

Svenska Dagbladet 19 May 2010 p:17 (in Swedish)

### **Missing girl apprehended**

The ten-year old girl who was found Tuesday night after having been missing since Friday, has been taken into care by the social services. She refuses to say where she has been. The girl was found when she was coming out from a shop in Borås, and an employee of the shop recognized her from the newspaper pictures. She was then taken to the police station in Borås. The girl belongs to a refugee family who received their deportation order last week. Since the girl disappeared, the deportation has been postponed.

Sveriges Television 19 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://svt.se/2.22620/1.2006785/aterfunnen\\_flicka\\_omhandertagen](http://svt.se/2.22620/1.2006785/aterfunnen_flicka_omhandertagen)

Svenska Dagbladet 19 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/aterfunnen-flicka-omhandertagen\\_4734201.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/aterfunnen-flicka-omhandertagen_4734201.svd)

Dagens Nyheter 19 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/forsvunnen-flicka-aterfunnen-1.1107723>

### **Dahlström wants to terminate refugee agreement**

To date, Katrineholm municipality has a contract with the Migration Board to receive 100 refugees per year. But Katrineholm receives more refugees than that and Mayor Goran Dahlström now wants to terminate the agreement. Dahlström says that they have received far more than they agreed, over 200 each year. At the municipal hearing on 26 May, he suggests that the municipality terminates the agreement. According to Dahlström, the main reasons for the Social Democrats in the municipality to terminate the agreement is the housing situation in Katrineholm and the high unemployment rate, as well as high pressure on social services and schools. Dahlström says that the municipality simply cannot offer refugees housing and jobs.

Katrineholms Kuriren 19 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://kkuriren.se/nyheter/katrineholm/1.705544>

## UNHCR in the news

### Refugees going back to Afghanistan

More people are returning to Afghanistan from refugee camps in Pakistan. The situation in Afghanistan has not improved, but people are tired of waiting for peace. There are officially 1,7 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. These have arrived since the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979. Until recently, when the Pakistan authorities said that the refugees will be allowed to stay until 2012, their future in the country has been uncertain. Since UNHCR's center in Peshawar recently re-opened after the winter season, about one thousand persons have left Pakistan for Afghanistan each day. Babar Baloch, UNHCR's spokesperson in Pakistan, says that if this trend continues, more persons will return than in previous years. Some leave Pakistan because they believe that their life here has become more difficult. Both the inflation rate and unemployment rates have increased. The security situation in parts of Pakistan is so bad that some even believe that it is better on the other side of the border. The refugees receive 100 dollars per family member as a relocation allowance from the UN, but after that they are forced to make it one their own. Baloch says that refugees have to find jobs and homes after they return to Afghanistan. He says that most of the refugees go to urban areas, the province capitals and Kabul, where the opportunities are greater.

Aftenposten 15 May 2010 p:6 (in Norwegian)

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## Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A summary of asylum and refugee-related stories in regional media.

Thursday 13 May to Monday 17 May 2010

### Denmark

#### **Human Rights institute criticizes government's new immigration laws**

The Danish Institute for Human Rights criticizes the Government's new immigration laws that are based on a points system, allowing immigrants to gain permanent residency in four years if they get enough points through both paid and voluntary work and other signs of integration. They warn that the system will in effect exclude immigrants from the Danish society, scare away qualified foreign labour and lead to violations of human rights unless exceptions are made. Large groups of immigrants are not able to live up to the demands which include passing a test in the Danish language, having full-time employment for 2½ out of 3 years and not having received any type of public aid in the same period. With demands this high, the Institute fears that many will not even try. The Danish People's Party denies that demands are too high.

Berlingske Tidende 13 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://www.berlingske.dk/danmark/haard-kritik-af-ny-udlaendingelov>

The Copenhagen Post 14 May 2010 (in English)

<http://www.cphpost.dk/news/national/88-national/48982-human-rights-institute-blasts-immigration-laws.html>

#### **Fewer Iraqi asylum-seekers coming to Denmark**

There has been a clear decrease in the influx of Iraqi asylum-seekers coming to Denmark after the country signed an agreement on forced returns of rejected Iraqi asylum-seekers. In 2009, 305 Iraqis sought asylum in Denmark compared with 1,071 in 2007 and 562 in 2008. This year the figure will continue decreasing. The improved security situation in Iraq is thought to be one of the reasons behind the decrease in Iraqi asylum-seekers. Today, 71 rejected Iraqis are waiting for a deportation from Denmark.

Jyllands-Posten 13 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://jp.dk/indland/article2067469.ece>

#### **Families are split when one parent is deported**

There are several foreign citizens with Danish permanent residencies who are living as sole parents because the Danish authorities have decided to deport the other parent, splitting the families. The motivation is that the couple has a stronger connection to the country of origin than to Denmark, which is why the application for family reunification has been denied. The Liberals have commented on one case, saying that it is not a right to lead one's family life in the country one happens to be in. The Social Liberals have commented on some other specific cases that it is "unreasonable" to expect that

persons with certain backgrounds could go back to Iraq and resume family life there. The Socialist People's Part says that the Convention on the Rights of the Child always must be followed, but that it is also important to be consistent when it comes to asylum, and if an application is denied it is denied for a reason.

Politiken 17 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://politiken.dk/indland/article972361.ece>

## Estonia

### **Majority of stateless live in the capital and in the country's northeast**

Of the 103,800 stateless persons living in Estonia with a residence permit or residence right the overwhelming majority lives in the capital Tallinn and in East-Viru County in the country's northeast. Stateless residents younger than 15 years of age number 2,065.

The number of stateless residents decreased by 5,502 last year, from 110,315 on January 2009 to 104,813 on January this year.

Baltic News Service 13 May 2010 (in English) (Subscription required)

[www.bns.ee](http://www.bns.ee)

### **Naturalization of new citizens decreasing**

The naturalization of new citizens has been on a downward trend in Estonia in recent years. Only 1,670 persons became Estonian citizens during 2009, the smallest number since the country regained its independence. Estonia granted citizenship to 2,124 persons in 2008, to 4,228 in 2007 and to 4,753 in 2006. During this decade the number of Estonian citizens increased the most in 2005 when the government granted citizenship to 7,072 persons. The peak time of granting Estonian citizenship was in the mid-1990s, with 22,773 persons granted Estonian citizenship in 1996. The proportion of stateless has constantly contracted after the restoration of Estonian independence. In 1992 the percentage of stateless was 32, in 1999 13 per cent and at present less than 9 per cent of the population.

Baltic News Service 13 May 2010 (in English) (Subscription required)

[www.bns.ee](http://www.bns.ee)

## Finland

### **Parliament wants report on benefits for immigrants and asylum-seekers**

The Finnish Parliament is asking the government for a broad clarification of matters related to family unification. The Parliament's Administrative Committee is interested in how Finnish rules and benefits compare with those in other European Union countries and Nordic Countries. The committee also wants to know if there is something about the Finnish rules which would make Finland a particularly attractive country for asylum-seekers.

Helsingin Sanomat 17 May 2010 (in English)

<http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Parliament+wants+report+on+benefits+for+immigrants+and+asylum+seekers/1135256833107>

### **Committee wants to prevent adult children of refugees from moving to Finland**

The Parliament's Administrative Committee wants to make it more difficult for the children of refugees to be granted residence permits. The committee, which is working

to change Finland's Aliens Act, is proposing that refugees' children be granted residence permits only if they are minors when officials make the decision. Currently, these children can receive a residence permit if they come to Finland as minors but turn 18 by the time their applications are processed. The group is also proposing that officials be allowed to use certain biological evidence if they suspect a child's documented age is false. For instance, if an applicant claims to be a minor but is able to grow a beard, this could be used as evidence against him. Finland had given up using such evidence to determine an individual's age in the past after officials said the methods had no legal basis.

YLE 12 May 2010 (in English)

[http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/committee\\_wants\\_to\\_prevent\\_adult\\_children\\_of\\_refugees\\_from\\_moving\\_to\\_finland\\_1678856.html](http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/committee_wants_to_prevent_adult_children_of_refugees_from_moving_to_finland_1678856.html)

### **EU asylum-seekers' applications on fast track**

The Finnish Immigration Service intends to continue the speedy processing of asylum-seekers' applications from the EU. In April, the agency began the quick processing on a trial basis. The trial period is to end by the end of May this year. Since launching of the trial, officials have noted a drop in the number of asylum-seekers from Bulgaria. In April, the Immigration Service began making decisions on applications from EU citizens on the same day that applicants were interviewed by the police. Esko Repo, the director of the asylum unit at the Immigration Service, says the fast-track processing of applications from the EU will continue. He adds that the word of Finland's fast process will spread quickly among asylum-seekers in various countries. EU citizens cannot be granted asylum in Finland. However, they have the right to social benefits for as long as their applications are processed. It is expected that the number of EU citizens seeking asylum in Finland will taper off once they can no longer receive benefits.

YLE 12 May 2010 (in English)

[http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/eu\\_asylum\\_seekers\\_applications\\_on\\_fast\\_track\\_1678468.html](http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/eu_asylum_seekers_applications_on_fast_track_1678468.html)

YLE 12 May 2010 (in Finnish)

[http://yle.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/2010/05/nopeutettu\\_kaannytys\\_on\\_tehokasta\\_1677812.html](http://yle.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/2010/05/nopeutettu_kaannytys_on_tehokasta_1677812.html)

### **Begging may be banned outright**

Finland's Ministry of the Interior is studying the basis for an outright ban on begging. Begging has become more aggressive in nature, and more closely linked to criminal phenomena. For example, Finland's National Bureau of Investigation has uncovered traces of international human trafficking among the Romanian beggars arriving in Finland. In Helsinki alone, some estimates place the number of Romanian beggars at as high as a couple of hundred. The number is expected to rise as summer approaches. A ban on begging was already considered a couple of years ago. A working group at the time decided against proposing a change to the law, however. The group concluded that a ban would not prevent poor EU nationals from arriving in Finland.

Helsinki Times 14 May 2010 (in English)

<http://www.helsinkitimes.fi/htimes/domestic-news/general/11042-begging-may-be-banned-outright-.html>

### **Local authorities worried about costs concerning asylum-seekers**

If a proposed law amendment becomes reality, rejected asylum-seekers from the EU countries will have to leave reception centers as soon as they are rejected by the

Immigration Service. The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities is concerned that asylum-seekers from other EU countries become clients of the municipal social services in the future, instead of being cared for by the state. The municipal costs would rise to half a million euros, estimates Jussi Merikallio, the associations Director of Social and Health Affairs. Expenditures would be composed of the asylum-seekers' social support, housing and health care costs.

YLE 15 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://svenska.yle.fi/nyheter/artikel.php?id=186380>

### **The capital area will tackle integration problems**

The integration of immigrants in the metropolitan area will be made more effective. In a project funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the municipalities of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa have tackled the shortcomings causing integration problems for immigrants. The capital Helsinki is concentrating on informing immigrants so that they know by whom, how and where they are cared for. Espoo will provide language classes for mothers and Vantaa will work with family reunification. The number of immigrants has doubled in recent years and the municipalities in the metropolitan area lack employees dealing with immigration issues.

YLE 14 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://svenska.yle.fi/nyheter/artikel.php?id=186263>

## **Norway**

### **Norway's deportations in breach with UN recommendations**

Norway returns asylum-seekers to some countries and regions which the UN does not consider safe. Greece and parts of Somalia and Iraq are examples of this. Several Human rights organisations including The Norwegian Association for Asylum-seekers (NOAS), Amnesty International, Save the Children and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee have during the past winter been running a campaign called "Do as the UN says, Jens!". Sylo Taraku, Secretary General of NOAS, says that there has been an orientation towards a more restrictive interpretation of UN recommendations in the past years. State Secretary Pål K Lønseth at the Department of Justice denies that there has been a change of policy. UNHCR has understanding for the fact that Norway does not always follow UN recommendations when it comes to the returning of asylum-seekers. Hanne Mathisen, spokeswoman for the UNHCR Regional Office for the Baltic and Nordic countries, says that Norway does not ignore the UN recommendations, but studies them and refers to them when processing asylum applications. Hanne Mathisen notes that it is understandable that Norway comes to conclusions that are not in line with UNHCR's recommendations, and that the question is whether Norway could have done a bit more for some groups. She adds that it is not often that UNHCR comes with categorical recommendations against the return of persons to a country or a region. Mathisen says that it can be difficult to be the only country in Europe that does not conduct returns to Greece. She adds that UNHCR's criticism is not so much directed against Norway which is only following European standards, but that all European countries should be more restrictive when it comes to returning persons to Greece, since there is a risk that those in need of protection will be left without it.

Aftenposten 16 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article3653168.ece>

### **UDI denies police access to its archives**

The Directorate of Immigration (UDI) will close its extensive archive from the police. 1.6 million persons who have sought or have gained a residence permit in Norway are registered in the system. The Police will no longer be able to use UDI's archives for investigation and criminal matters. UDI refers to privacy issues.

NRK 14 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/norge/1.7125040>

### **Somalia risks facing starvation**

According to the UN, 3.4 million Somalis, about 43 per cent of population, need food aid in order not to starve. The security situation in Somalia is becoming worse, and is particularly acute in central and southern parts of the country. UNHCR fears that food rations need to be reduced by June this year unless the international community provides the support that has been requested. Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) urges the Norwegian government to follow UNHCR's recommendations and give refugees from Somalia protection in Norway. Elisabeth Rasmussen, Secretary General of NRC, says that by returning persons to Somalia the Norwegian authorities contribute to more persons becoming internally displaced. Since January 2010, 336 Somalis have sought asylum in Norway.

NRK 17 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/verden/1.7122113>

## **Sweden**

### **Iraqi journalist stabbed in Sweden**

Ali Taleb, asylum seeking journalist and documentary filmmaker from Iraq, was stabbed by an unknown man on Sunday evening in Jakobsberg, north of Stockholm. Reporters Without Borders suspect that he was stabbed because of his journalistic work. In March this year Ali Taleb reported to All-Hurra from Sweden about Iraqi refugees who are forced to return to Iraq. After that, Ali Taleb and his family received death threats.

Sveriges Television 13 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://svt.se/2.27170/1.2000557/irakisk\\_journalist\\_knivhuggen\\_i\\_sverige?lid=senasteNytt\\_400080&lpos=rubrik\\_2000557](http://svt.se/2.27170/1.2000557/irakisk_journalist_knivhuggen_i_sverige?lid=senasteNytt_400080&lpos=rubrik_2000557)

## **UNHCR in the news**

### **UN: over 300,000 Somali refugees**

The UN refugee agency UNHCR estimates that 315,000 Somalis will have to leave the country as refugees this year. According to the UN the humanitarian crisis in Somalia has deteriorated. Already more than half a million Somalis have fled to neighboring countries and around 1.4 million live in Somalia as internal refugees. UNHCR has appealed to donors saying over 38 million dollars is needed to assist refugees. The Western countries support the government of Somalia, which fights against the Islamic militias dominating large areas of the country's central and southern parts.

YLE 12 May 2010 (in Finnish)

[http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/ulkomaat/2010/05/yk\\_yli\\_300\\_000\\_uutta\\_somalipakolaista\\_1677292.html](http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/ulkomaat/2010/05/yk_yli_300_000_uutta_somalipakolaista_1677292.html)

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## Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A summary of asylum and refugee-related stories in regional media.

Tuesday 11 May to Wednesday 12 May 2010

### Denmark

#### **Danish People's Party want to introduce asylum stop**

Refugees from certain countries could for periods of up to one year be excluded from the possibility of seeking asylum in Denmark. The Danish People's Party believes that this is the way to curb the rising number of asylum-seekers coming to the country. The Danish People's Party are now asking Minister of Integration Birthe Rønn Hornbech (V) to consider their proposal. Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen, a researcher in refugee law at the Danish Institute for International Studies believes that an asylum-stop would probably be in violation of both the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights. He says that both the conventions state that there is a responsibility not to send people back if they are in risk of being persecuted or tortured. Gammeltoft-Hansen says that in practice this means that Denmark must let everyone apply for asylum.

Kristeligt Dagblad 11 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/artikel/365820:Danmark--Dansk-Folkeparti-vil-indfoere-asylstop>

#### **Sick refugees must still wait for help**

According to the Danish Refugee Council, refugees traumatized by for instance torture are still waiting up to 18 months for treatment despite a two-month treatment guarantee in the psychiatric field. This is due to a lack of resources at the treatment centers. Traumas worsen over time when left untreated, and there is a risk that the traumas are transferred to the children when parents are unable to give them the emotional support and feeling of safety that they need. Danish Refugee Council has reviewed the waiting lists at 14 rehabilitation centers in Denmark. Only three met the healthcare guarantee.

Danmarks Radio 11 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2010/05/11/160015.htm>

Jyllands-Posten 11 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://jp.dk/indland/article2065187.ece>

Berlingske Tidende 11 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://www.berlingske.dk/danmark/regioner-beklager-flygtninge>

Jyllands-Posten 11 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://jp.dk/indland/article2065303.ece>

## **Thinned group of rejected Iraqis**

One year after the government signed a repatriation agreement with Iraq, the group of rejected Iraqis has thinned out considerably. When the agreement was signed in May last year, there were 280 Iraqis who had been refused asylum in Denmark. 76 of them have now left. Some have left voluntarily, and others have been forcibly returned to Baghdad. A total of 88 Iraqis are waiting to be sent back to Iraq in the near future.

Politiken 12 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://politiken.dk/indland/article969156.ece>

## **Norway**

### **Will move asylum registration from the police to the UDI**

Today the Police Immigration Unit (PU) is responsible for registering new asylum-seekers that come to Norway, but the Justice Department wants to transfer this responsibility to the Directorate for Immigration (UDI). The government wants the police immigration unit to spend more time on evicting people without residence permits.

Moving the registration of asylum-seekers to the UDI is not uncontroversial. Sources in the PU says that it is crucial that the professional police personnel carry out the initial registration of newly arrived asylum-seekers since they, among other things, are experts at exposing lies and false identification papers. The Department of Justice will not comment on the matter until they have talked with representatives from the police on Tuesday.

Aftenposten 11 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article3646189.ece>

TV2 Nyhetene 10 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.tv2nyhetene.no/innenriks/politikk/vil-flytte-asylregistreringen-til-udi-3205314.html>

## **Sweden**

### **Refugee lawyer critical towards deportations of beggars**

The number of EU citizens who beg on the streets of Sweden has risen sharply in recent years. But despite the fact that begging is not illegal in Sweden, the police have increasingly begun to directly deport beggars to their home countries – in most cases to Eastern Europe. Refugee lawyer Hans Bredberg believes that the police do not often have legal grounds for the expulsions, and says it is doubtful that the police can take such decisions. He adds that an EU citizen cannot be deported on the basis of begging.

Sveriges Television 11 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://svt.se/2.22620/1.1998135/tiggare\\_direktavvisas\\_av\\_polisen](http://svt.se/2.22620/1.1998135/tiggare_direktavvisas_av_polisen)

## **UNHCR in the news**

### **UN calls on countries to take more refugees from Somalia**

The UN refugee agency UNHCR urged its member countries on Tuesday to provide asylum for refugees from Somalia, even if they do not meet all formal requirements. The organization says that it has changed its recommendations because persons fleeing from central and southern Somalia are in need of international protection. UNHCR spokeswoman Melissa Fleming says the circumstances in Somalia have deteriorated

steadily and the situation in the country's southern and central parts is acute. The Islamist militias have waged a war against Somalia's weak government since 2007. The militias are in control of most of southern and central Somalia. Around 1.4 million persons have been forced to flee the fighting to calmer parts of the country. Over half a million Somalis have fled to Somalia's neighboring countries.

Vasabladet 11 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://www.vasabladet.fi/Story/WireStory.aspx?storyID=19452>

Keskisuomalainen 11 May 2010 (in Finnish)

<http://www.ksml.fi/uutiset/ulkomaat/yk-kehotti-ottamaan-lis%C3%A4%C3%A4-pakolaisia-somaliasta/560203>

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## Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A summary of asylum and refugee-related stories in regional media.

Saturday 8 May to Monday 10 May 2010

### Finland

#### Thors on hate crimes

Minister of Migration and European Affairs Astrid Thors spoke at the Swedish People's Party's Youth Congress (SU) in Pargas on Saturday. Minister Thors said that the current racist discussion on the internet affects the morale of the society. She also said that on May Day there was a peak of violent racist crimes which she thinks are connected to the explosion of racist writings on the internet. Minister Thors wants that hate crimes, even on the internet, should have a more independent role in the legislation so that the society can intervene before a crime happens.

Hufvudstadsbladet 8 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://www.hbl.fi/text/inrikes/2010/5/8/w46717.php>

### Norway

#### Plans to establish care centre in Kabul

Norwegian authorities want to stop the flow of unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers to Norway. Most of the children are Afghans, and therefore efforts to establish a care center in Kabul has been started. Norway uses the Netherlands' experience with a care center in Angola as a good example of such care centers, where only one minor applicant has been returned to the center since it was established in 2003. 168 others were also returned to Angola, but they were picked up by relatives. Dutch Justice Ministry sources they were surprised that relatives suddenly appeared, but that they "know" that the children were not obtained by unauthorized persons. The number of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers from Angola to the Netherlands decreased considerably after the care center was established. The Norwegian Centre in Kabul will have 100 seats, of which 50 will be reserved for the return of young asylum-seekers coming to Norway. The plan is that the center will be completed this fall. There are also plans for a center in northern Iraq. State secretary K. Pal Lønseth says he is fairly certain that a care center in Kabul will lead to fewer unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan seeking asylum. Manizha Bakhtari, Afghanistan's ambassador in Oslo begs the Norwegian authorities to not return the young asylum-seekers by force. Human rights organisations have criticized the plans.

Aftenposten 8 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article3643510.ece>

### **Stopped deportation of asylum-seekers in the 11th hour**

Just hours before the 29-year-old from Afghanistan was to be sent out of Norway, a judge in Strasbourg stepped in and stopped the Norwegian process. On Friday, Asylum lawyer Arild Humlen contacted the Greek judge Christos Rozakis in the Human Rights Court in Strasbourg who put a full stop to the planned deportation at 6 am Saturday morning. Humlen says that the judge was brave to do so since there is a very strong political push in Europe to send asylum-seekers back. But according to the international standards that many countries have, this should be a legal and not a political issue. The Immigration Police Unit (PU) confirms that the planned deportation is stopped. The man is still in prison, and he will not be released even if the deportation case has been put on hold.

Verdens Gang 7 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/artikkel.php?artid=10005629>

### **UDI denies the Red Cross access to information**

The Directorate for Immigration (UDI) will not grant the Red Cross access to their tracing services that could help determine whether persons who are reported missing by their family live in Norway. President of the Norwegian Red Cross, Sven Mollekleiv, is dissatisfied with UDI's refusal and says that for them this is vital work. He says that all they are asking for is to be able to help people find their nearest. Last year more than 200 people asked for help to find relatives they believed were staying in Norway. UDI's rejection is based on legal grounds, but also justified by policy considerations, resources, and practical and security reasons. According to the UDI so-called refugee espionage, which means that foreign actors engage refugees to gather intelligence on their own citizens or citizens of other countries, occurs in Norway.

NRK 10 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/norge/1.7118049>

## **Sweden**

### **UN Committee Against Torture slams Sweden**

The UN Committee Against Torture has said that Sweden breached the rights of an Egyptian man when it deported him to his home country where he was later tortured. The Committee had already criticized Sweden in 2005 for having expelled Ahmed Agiza, together with another man, Mohammad Alzery, in 2001. The two were suspected of involvement in an extremist organization with links to al-Qaeda.

Svenska Dagbladet 7 May 2010 p:12 (in Swedish)

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/fn-fel-att-avvisa-egyptier\\_4686175.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/fn-fel-att-avvisa-egyptier_4686175.svd)

### **Sweden receives criticism from the UN Human Rights Council**

At a review by the UN Human Rights Council on Friday, many countries criticized Sweden for growing discrimination of asylum-seekers, immigrants and refugees and for more hate crimes against ethnic minorities and racist crimes. The leader of the US delegation stressed that Sweden must do more to integrate immigration groups. Fredrik Belfrage, leader of the Swedish delegation, said afterwards that Sweden had received a generally positive assessment. Belfrage admitted that Sweden faces significant challenges such as hate crimes, anti-Semitism and discrimination of ethnic minorities and that these challenges are taken extremely seriously and will be dealt with.

Svenska Dagbladet 7 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/fn-lander-stalldes-verige-till-svars\\_4686093.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/fn-lander-stalldes-verige-till-svars_4686093.svd)

### **Investigation on health care for paperless refugees**

Asylum-seekers' and paperless refugees' right to health care are currently being investigated. Parts of the study have received criticism. According to a committee directive issued by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs the proposals of the study must not contribute to more persons remaining illegally in Sweden. Anita Dorazio from the Asylum Committee (Asylkommittén) is very critical towards the directive, saying that the discussion is about health care and not about individual asylum cases. Minister for Health and Social Affairs Göran Hägglund believes research and examples from other countries show that free health care to paperless persons has no negative impact on migration policy and that the exact wording of the directive will not make any difference. Sveriges Radio 7 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=103&artikel=3682652>

### **Firm sues Sweden over dislodged Muslim lawyer**

A law firm is suing the Swedish state for discrimination after one of its lawyers, a Muslim woman, was removed from a case following a complaint from a Christian asylum-seeker. The lawyer was appointed last autumn by the Migration Board to represent an Egyptian man seeking asylum in Sweden. The man, a Christian, said he and his family were seeking asylum on grounds of persecution by Muslims in their home country. The Local 8 May 2010 (in English)

<http://www.thelocal.se/26528/20100508/>

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UNHCR bears no responsibility for the accuracy and content of the press summary, which is based on external news services and does not reflect the views of UNHCR.

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## Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A summary of asylum and refugee-related stories in regional media.

Thursday 6 May to Friday 7 May 2010

### Denmark

#### **Human rights organization will respond to new immigration law**

The Institute for Human Rights (IMR) has dropped its boycott of Minister of Integration Birthe Rønn Hornbech (V) and agreed to respond to the government's bill for new immigration legislation. IMR had originally declined to comment, claiming that the government was trying to rush the new legislation, but has now had a change of heart after Ms Hornbech promised that any response would be studied carefully. Head of IMR Jonas Christoffersen says that since the minister assured them that their input is invaluable they will do all they can to live up to their share of responsibility. He also says that the proposed legislation contains substantial changes, with very significant consequences for human rights, that they need to shed light on. The bill was given its first reading on 19 April and the IMR has to respond before the second reading on 20 May.

NordJyske 6 May 2010 (in Danish)

<http://www.nordjyske.dk/indland/forside.aspx?ctrl=10&data=2%2c3563838%2c5%2c2>

### Estonia

#### **Trafficking in Estonian women on the rise**

According to Tiina Jokst, Consul at the Estonian Embassy in Athens, fictitious marriages between Estonian women and illegal immigrants living in Greece and Cyprus have become a serious problem during recent years. The reason behind the growing number of fictitious marriages is a recent ruling that provides immigrants with a better chance of getting a residence permit if they are married to citizens of the EU. According to various sources the sum paid to girls for marrying an illegal immigrant is up to 6,000 euros.

Baltic News Service 6 May 2010 (in English) (Subscription required)

[www.bns.ee](http://www.bns.ee)

### Finland

#### **Refugees remain in limbo far too long**

Refugees have to wait far too long for a decision on asylum, according to Ritva Viljanen, the permanent secretary at the Ministry of the Interior. Viljanen was speaking at the 20th anniversary celebration of the Finnish Red Cross in Turku on Thursday. Viljanen urged municipalities to take in refugees who have been granted residence permits. She added

that expenses increase when holders of residence permits are forced to live at refugee reception centres. Furthermore, she said it prohibits the integration process. Currently about 500 refugees who have been granted residence permits remain in limbo at reception centres. According to the UNHCR, there are over 15 million refugees worldwide. The number rises to over 42 million when including internally displaced people.

YLE 6 May 2010 (in English)

[http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/refugees\\_remain\\_in\\_limbo\\_far\\_too\\_long\\_1662288.htm](http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/refugees_remain_in_limbo_far_too_long_1662288.htm)

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YLE 6 May 2010 (in English)

[http://www.yle.fi/alueet/turku/2010/05/pakolaiset\\_joutuvat\\_odottamaan\\_turvapaikkapaa\\_tosta\\_liian\\_kauan\\_1661978.html](http://www.yle.fi/alueet/turku/2010/05/pakolaiset_joutuvat_odottamaan_turvapaikkapaa_tosta_liian_kauan_1661978.html)

### **Refugees top the list of unemployed immigrants in Finland**

There are significant differences in the employment situation for immigrants of different nationalities in Finland. The highest rates of unemployment are found among Somalis, Iraqis and Afghans who have arrived as refugees. For example, the rate of unemployment for Somalis, Iraqis and Afghans is over 50%. The Director of Immigration Affairs for the City of Helsinki, Annika Forsander, is dismayed by the position of Somalis in the Finnish capital. In other countries, Somali immigrants have integrated well into society. Language skills are often an excuse used by employers to turn down foreign job applicants.

YLE 6 May 2010 (in English)

[http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/major\\_unemployment\\_differences\\_among\\_immigrant\\_groups\\_1663217.html](http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/major_unemployment_differences_among_immigrant_groups_1663217.html)

YLE 6 May 2010 (in Finnish)

[http://yle.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/2010/05/ulkomailta\\_tulleiden\\_tyottomyydessa\\_suuria\\_eroja\\_1644070.html](http://yle.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/2010/05/ulkomailta_tulleiden_tyottomyydessa_suuria_eroja_1644070.html)

### **Gambian gay man not to be deported**

Helsinki Administrative Court has overturned the deportation order of a Gambian man who is persecuted in his home country due to his homosexuality. The man has sought asylum in Finland because of his sexual orientation. In Gambia, homosexuality can lead to 14 years imprisonment. The Immigration Service issued a negative decision in March.

Aamulehti 6 May 2010 (in Finnish)

<http://www.aamulehti.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/gambialaisen-homomiehen-karkotus-kumottu/178226>

## **Norway**

### **Drops asylum proposal**

In September 2008, Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg proposed 13 restrictive measures to decrease the number of asylum-seekers. The government has now decided to drop one of the proposals, a requirement of four years of working as a prerequisite to allow family reunification of refugees. The proposal was meant to apply both persons who have the right to stay on humanitarian grounds, as well as those with refugee status. The Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) has criticized the proposal and says that they consider such a strategy to reduce the number of asylum-seekers arriving in Norway to be very disturbing. The Red Cross was also against the proposal,

since they believe that each case should be individually evaluated. The Progress Party believes that the government's turnaround is a sad day for the Norwegian asylum policy. The Progress Party's spokesperson Per-Willy Amundsen says that Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg is adopting the Socialist Left Party's naive politics.

Dagsavisen 6 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article484164.ece>

TV2 Nyhetene 6 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.tv2nyhetene.no/innenriks/-dropper-krav-til-familiegjeforening-3201930.html>

Halden Dagblad 6 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.haldendagblad.no/innenriks/article5103784.ece>

### **Lowest number of asylum applications in three years**

A total of 3,029 applications for asylum have been registered so far this year. According to the UDI, that is a decrease of 41 per cent compared to same period last year. UDI Deputy Director Frode Forfang says that the decline in April continues the trend that they have seen in recent months, but that it is still too early to say with certainty whether this is a lasting trend or not. For unaccompanied minors, the decline is even bigger with 62 per cent fewer applicants so far this year. The decline will lead to a decline in the number of reception places needed, but no reception centers are currently being closed. The situation will be evaluated throughout the year.

NRK 7 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/norge/1.7115002>

## **Sweden**

### **Malmström: Guardian for all unaccompanied minors**

On Thursday Cecilia Malmström, the European Commissioner for home affairs, announced an action plan attempting to create a common European approach to the estimated 100,000 unaccompanied minors who arrive in Europe every year. The plan includes a proposal to provide all unaccompanied minors who come to the EU with a guardian and legal representation in the country in which they arrive, and find to return in a dignified manner those without grounds for protection. The majority of unaccompanied minors arrive in Europe from Afghanistan, Iraq and some African countries. Most of them are boys between 16 and 18 years old. In order to reduce the influx of unaccompanied minors to the EU, Malmström suggests information campaigns to be held in the countries of origin. However, she does not want to propose a common methodology for age assessment, which several countries have demanded. She refers to the fact that there is no sure method to assess age at the moment. Instead, Malmström emphasizes the importance of increasing training on age assessment and develop common guidelines in the long term. At the same time as Malmström announced her plan, a report by the European Migration Network was published showing that different countries use very different methods to assess the age of unaccompanied minors.

Sveriges Television 6 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://svt.se/2.22620/1.1991752/vill\\_ge\\_flyktningbarn\\_ombud?lid=senasteNytt\\_1447662&lpos=rubrik\\_1991752](http://svt.se/2.22620/1.1991752/vill_ge_flyktningbarn_ombud?lid=senasteNytt_1447662&lpos=rubrik_1991752)

Expressen 6 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://www.expressen.se/Nyheter/1.1977866/malmstrom-vill-ge-flyktningbarn-ombud>

Sveriges Radio 6 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://mobil.sr.se/site/index.aspx?artikel=3677653&unitid=83>

Sveriges Radio 6 May 2010 (in English)

<http://sverigesradio.se/cgi->

<bin/International/nyhetssidor/artikel.asp?ProgramID=2054&Format=1&artikel=3678464>

Nyhetskanalen.se 6 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://www.nyhetskanalen.se/1.1627053/2010/05/01/malmstrom\\_vill\\_ge\\_flyktingbarn\\_ombud](http://www.nyhetskanalen.se/1.1627053/2010/05/01/malmstrom_vill_ge_flyktingbarn_ombud)

### **Sweden wants to send back more unaccompanied minors**

Tobias Billström, the Minister for Migration and Asylum Policy, has tasked the Swedish Migration Board to find suitable care centres in Iraq and Afghanistan as a first step in the efforts to send back unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers who are not in need of protection. The Migration Board is due to visit Baghdad and Kabul this month. The centres will be opened already this summer. The biggest group of unaccompanied minors coming to Sweden is Somali boys, who have a strong need for protection and are usually allowed to stay. In May, the Migration Board will return 158 unaccompanied minors, of which 75 to Iraq and 12 to Afghanistan. Sweden, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands and the UK have all made plans to establish care centres for unaccompanied minors in the countries of origin. According to Dan Eliasson, Director of the Migration Board, children who are returned back will be provided with housing and secure access to education and health care. Save the Children Sweden criticizes these plans saying many of the children will try to come to Europe again, and that the care centres could attract traffickers.

Dagens Nyheter 6 May 2010 p:14 (in Swedish)

### **UN criticizes Sweden for treatment of asylum-seekers**

On Friday for the first time, the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva will hold a hearing on the human rights situation in Sweden. The UN criticizes Sweden for lack of respect for human rights and says the country does not follow the major UN conventions. In a report the UN writes that hate crimes and diffusion of white power music and propaganda in Sweden are on the rise. The report also mentions that children of ethnic minorities and asylum-seekers are subjected to disturbing xenophobia and racist attitudes. Some asylum-seekers face long detention periods, or deportation because their case is pending. The UN also criticizes Sweden for the treatment of unaccompanied minors, and writes that a worrying number of these children disappear from the reception centres. In addition, the report mentions that undocumented children in Sweden are entitled to emergency treatment only, which violates the children's rights.

Svenska Dagbladet 6 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/fn-kritik-av-hatbrott-i-sverige\\_4680943.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/fn-kritik-av-hatbrott-i-sverige_4680943.svd)

Sveriges Radio 7 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://mobil.sr.se/site/index.aspx?artikel=3680585&unitid=83&offset=0>

### **Sweden increases refugee forecast again**

The Swedish Migration Board has increased its forecast to 31,000 for the number of persons expected to seek asylum this year. It has also requested an additional 60 million kronor (\$7.86 million) in 2010 to cope with the increased pressure. Previously, the Migration Board estimated that there would be 25,000 asylum-seekers in 2010, but in February, it increased its forecast to 28,000 and asked for an additional 50 million kronor for its budget. It has also increased its projection for next year by 1,000 to

28,000. The increase in the number of asylum-seekers is largely due to more persons from Serbia and Kosovo seeking refugee status following the abolition of visa requirements.

The Local 6 May 2010 (in English)

<http://www.thelocal.se/26504/20100506/>

Blekinge Läns Tidning 6 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://www.blt.se/nyheter/tt\\_inrikes/asylprognosen-skrivs-upp-ytterligare\(1911342\).gm](http://www.blt.se/nyheter/tt_inrikes/asylprognosen-skrivs-upp-ytterligare(1911342).gm)

Dagbladet 6 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://dagbladet.se/nyheter/inrikes/1.2009483-asylprognosen-skrivs-upp-ytterligare>

### **Asylum-seeker freed from arson charges**

The 28-year-old asylum-seeker who was charged with arson was acquitted on Wednesday. The man set himself on fire in April last year inside the Migration Board offices in Alvesta after having been told that he could not stay in Sweden. The man himself says he only intended to hurt himself. The 28-year-old has now a temporary residence permit in Sweden which allows him to stay in the country until the summer.

Sveriges Television 5 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://mobil.svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=52511&a=1991269>

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## Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A summary of asylum and refugee-related stories in regional media.

Tuesday 4 May to Wednesday 5 May 2010

### Finland

#### **Roma deportations conducted faster than before**

Asylum-seekers from the EU are deported faster than before. The time that the Bulgarian and Romanian asylum-seekers reside in Finland has been reduced by several weeks after the Finnish authorities started using fast-track procedures last month. The experiment continues until the end of May. Finland has received over 3,700 applications for asylum from Bulgarian and Romanian Roma during the past ten years. None of them has been successful.

Helsingin Sanomat 4 May 2010 (in Finnish)

<http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/artikkeli/Romanien+turvapaikkahakemusten+k%C3%A4sittely+lyheni+viikoilla/1135256567463>

Aamulehti 4 May 2010 (in Finnish)

<http://www.aamulehti.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/romanit-kaannytetaan-suomesta-viikkoja-aiempaa-nopeammin/177940>

YLE 4 May 2010 (in Finnish)

[http://yle.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/2010/05/eu-kansalaisten\\_kaannyttaminen\\_suomesta\\_nopeutui\\_viikoilla\\_1652906.html](http://yle.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/2010/05/eu-kansalaisten_kaannyttaminen_suomesta_nopeutui_viikoilla_1652906.html)

Turun Sanomat 4 May 2010 (in Finnish)

<http://www.ts.fi/online/kotimaa/129039.html>

#### **Asylum-seeker avoided deportation order**

A Gambian asylum-seeker has succeeded to resist his expulsion. The police tried to deport the Gambian but he resisted strongly. The man might face a new deportation, since the Administrative Court has not abolished the deportation order. The Immigration Service rejected his asylum request although the man says he is persecuted in his home country due to his homosexuality and will face prison or even death if deported.

Helsingin Sanomat 4 May 2010 (in Finnish)

[http://m.hs.fi/inf/infomo?site=hstxt&view=news\\_kaupunki\\_child&feed:a=hs.fi&feed:c=news&feed:i=1135256586469](http://m.hs.fi/inf/infomo?site=hstxt&view=news_kaupunki_child&feed:a=hs.fi&feed:c=news&feed:i=1135256586469)

Aamulehti 4 May 2010 (in Finnish)

<http://www.aamulehti.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/178032.shtml>

## Norway

### More will be sent out of Norway

The government will spend 90 million DKK to get more criminals and unwanted asylum-seekers deported or detained. Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg says that in his experience, an increased number of deportations reduces the number of asylum applications from people without the need for protection. Figures on the number of asylum-seekers arriving in Norway from the Directorate of Immigration shows a decrease of 36 percent in the first quarter of 2010. He says that people who are not entitled to stay in Norway shall not stay here. Minister of Justice Knut Storberget agrees and says that it is important to preserve the trust for, and basis for, the asylum policy. However, on Monday a ruling from the Supreme Court came that clearly undermines their efforts. A 22 year old man from Ghana was arrested after trying to sell the three grams of hashish. Both the Court and the Court of Appeal concluded that the asylum-seeker undermined the politics behind asylum and sentenced him to imprisonment. The Supreme Court changed the verdict and said that he and other asylum-seekers are equal before the law and should be treated just like Norwegians would be treated. The Progress Party's leader Siv Jensen criticizes the government for not proposing legislative amendments, and says that setting aside more funds for voluntary and involuntary returns will not help. She says that the only thing that will get the Supreme Court to act in line with the governments is changes in legislation. Storberget responds that the Court decides on the sentence, but that the government will decide on whether to deport these criminals when they have served their sentence or not. Many are deported to Greece, and Peter Eide, Secretary General of the Norwegian People's Aid, is criticizing the government for doing this since the asylum-seekers are not receiving any assistance or help there. Jensen responds that Greece is a EU country with an asylum system in place, and that Norway therefore should continue to return asylum-seekers to the first EU country they arrived in in accordance with the Dublin Convention. Out of the 90 million DKK, the government plans to distribute 37 million to strengthen the work on voluntary return, 22 million to strengthen the police's deportations efforts, and 33 million to 50 new spots at Trandum detention center. As a result, the government's targeted number of returns in 2010, including both voluntary returns and returns by force, is increased from 4900 to 5900.

NRK 4 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/norge/1.7109958>

Aftenposten 4 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article3636844.ece>

Dagbladet 4 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.dagbladet.no/2010/05/04/nyheter/innenriks/politikk/innvandring/asylpolitikk/11578261/>

NRK Nett-TV 'Asylsøkere – utkastelse' 4 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www1.nrk.no/nett-tv/indeks/212154>

NRK Nett-TV 'Strengere asylpolitikk' 4 May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www1.nrk.no/nett-tv/indeks/212165>

### Refugees living in Norway with secret identities

Of the 6,000 refugees that received residence permits in Norway last year, 59 received protected identities. Figures that TV 2 has obtained from the Directorate of Immigration show that there are 490 refugees in Norway that have protected identities in total. Personal information on these refugees are kept secret by the UDI. The Directorate for

Integration and Diversity (IMDi) that settles refugees must apply for access to these cases. According IMDI one of the reasons as to why these people are living with hidden identities in Norwegian municipalities is the fear of assassination by foreign intelligence services. Another reason is that some are exposed to violence and threats. The UDI determines whether a refugee should be hidden in the data register or not.

TV2 Nyhetene May 2010 (in Norwegian)

<http://www.tv2nyhetene.no/innenriks/flyktninger-lever-i-norge-med-hemmelig-identitet-3196754.html>

## Sweden

### **Sudden cease of refugee boats to Malta**

In recent years the EU's smallest member country Malta has received an influx of refugees arriving on boat from Africa. But since September, there have not been new boat arrivals to Malta. Jon Hoisaeter from UNHCR Malta notes that more than 10,000 refugees have come to Malta but now the influx of refugees has ceased. Hoisaeter adds that there is some reason behind this fact and it worries him. One reason for the sudden cease of refugees to Malta is believed to be Libya's measures to stop the boats before they set course northwards to Europe. This is something that worries human rights organizations since although Malta's refugee camps are known to have difficult conditions the situation is even worse in Libya. EU commissioner Cecilia Malmström visited Malta recently and says that the EU will now try to establish a dialog with Libya and aim at closer cooperation in migration issues.

Sveriges Television 4 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://svt.se/2.22584/1.1989840/plotsligt\\_slut\\_pa\\_nya\\_flyktingbatar\\_oroar](http://svt.se/2.22584/1.1989840/plotsligt_slut_pa_nya_flyktingbatar_oroar)

### **More asylum-seekers in the EU**

Figures from Eurostat, the European Commission's statistical information service, show that more than 260,000 asylum seekers registered with the authorities in the EU countries last year. The highest number of asylum-seekers registered with the authorities in France. The total number of asylum-seekers increased by 20,000 compared with 2008. The majority of persons applying for asylum in the EU come from Afghanistan, Russia, Somalia and Iraq. Most of the 19,100 Somali refugees who sought for asylum registered with the authorities in the Netherlands or in Sweden.

Dagbladet 4 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://dagbladet.se/nyheter/utrikes/1.2003295-fler-soker-asyll-i-eu-lander>

### **Policeman who requested sex from asylum-seeker fired**

An officer employed within the Swedish border police in Västra Götaland has been fired after offering a female asylum-seeker assistance in return for sex. The man now risks up to six years in prison. The man, who is in his sixties, has had his employment terminated with immediate effect following a decision by the National Swedish Police Disciplinary Board.

The Local 5 May 2010 (in English)

<http://www.thelocal.se/26460/20100505/>

Svenska Dagbladet 4 May 2010 (in Swedish)

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/polis-begarde-sex-sparkas\\_4663855.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/polis-begarde-sex-sparkas_4663855.svd)

### **Iranians protest outside the Migration Board in Kålleröd**

On Tuesday some 20 Iranians protested outside the Migration Board in Kålleröd. The goal was to stop the forcible returns of Iranians who are critical towards the regime. Tofigh Mohammadi from the national organization for Iranian refugees said in a statement that those who have participated in demonstrations against the government during last year are likely to be imprisoned, tortured or executed if they return.

Göteborgs Fria Tidning 4 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://www.goteborgsfria.nu/artikel/83645>

## UNHCR in the news

### Insecurity hampers the work of UNHCR in Afghanistan

The High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres says that the security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated in recent times. UNHCR has to use local workers and Afghan organizations to reach the thousands of refugees the organization is trying to help. Guterres said in Geneva that international aid workers now have access to only half of the area where UNHCR staff previously has worked. According to Guterres, aid workers have been subjected to violence partly because the difference between the humanitarian and military personnel is becoming increasingly blurred. Both seek to attain the confidence of the local population for example by building bridges and digging wells, but Afghans find it difficult to know who represents what. UNHCR has renewed its working methods by sending administrative personnel to Bangkok and by acquiring a strong security system. Guterres notes, however, that barbed wires, protection against explosion or armed guards are not enough to convince Afghans that relief organizations differ from foreign soldiers.

YLE 5 May 2010 (in Finnish)

[http://yle.fi/uutiset/ulkomaat/2010/05/turvattomuus\\_haittaa\\_avustusjarjestoja\\_afganistanissa\\_1658139.html](http://yle.fi/uutiset/ulkomaat/2010/05/turvattomuus_haittaa_avustusjarjestoja_afganistanissa_1658139.html)

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## Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A summary of asylum and refugee-related stories in regional media.

Saturday 1 May to Monday 3 May 2010

### Finland

#### **Migration Minister calls for crackdown on chat sites**

Minister Thors says she is shocked by the insults and bullying circulating on the internet and says online message boards should be monitored more closely. For instance, she pointed to some discussions on the popular Finnish social networking website, Suomi24. Last month Thors told YLE she was extremely concerned about spreading xenophobia on the internet. She called for immediate condemnation of the hostile rhetoric before it escalates into violence.

YLE 3 May 2010 (in English)

[http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/migration\\_minister\\_calls\\_for\\_crackdown\\_on\\_chat\\_sites\\_1649444.html](http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/05/migration_minister_calls_for_crackdown_on_chat_sites_1649444.html)

YLE 3 May 2010 (in Finnish)

[http://yle.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/2010/05/thors\\_tuukentaisi\\_netikeskusteluiden\\_valvontaa\\_1649365.html](http://yle.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/2010/05/thors_tuukentaisi_netikeskusteluiden_valvontaa_1649365.html)

YLE 3 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://svenska.yle.fi/nyheter/artikel.php?id=185442>

#### **Finland chooses quota refugees on dossier basis only**

The Finnish Immigration Service's Director General Jorma Vuorio has decided that Finland will not travel to Rwanda this year to interview the 150 Congolese refugees who Finland intends to receive. The decision was made in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior's Immigration Department. This is the first time Finland has selected quota refugees on dossier basis only. Decision was made after the Finnish Security Police (SUPO) announced that it would not attend the selection mission. According to SUPO, Congolese women and children do not pose a threat to the Finnish national security. Another reason is that the Immigration Service lacks resources. Third reason is that during the previous years, Finland has received refugees from the same area and their situation and history are well known to the selection officials. Quota refugees are refugees who have been granted a refugee status by UNHCR. Internationally, the policy Finland has chosen to follow is not exceptional. Sweden selects half of its quota refugees on dossier basis only.

Helsingin Sanomat 30 April 2010 (in Finnish)

<http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/artikkeli/Suomi+valitsee+kiinti%C3%B6pakolaisia+ensi+kerta+pelkill%C3%A4+papereilla/1135256512394>

## Sweden

### Paperless boy found on boat

A twelve-year-old boy without both passport and money was found on board the German Stena Line ferry in Gothenburg. The boy claims he is from Iraq but the boat personnel say that he probably comes from Morocco. The boy says he wants to seek asylum in Sweden and has now been transferred to the Migration Board facilities.

Nyheter24 2 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://nyheter24.se/nyheter/inrikes/376454-papperslos-pojke-hittad-pa-bat>

SVT 2 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://mobil.svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=52469&a=1986447>

### No to Högsby municipality's requirements

Högsby municipality will not receive state compensation for hosting refugees. The municipality requested SEK 1.9 million for compensation for a group of persons who came from Liberia in 2006. The Minister for Migration and Asylum Policy Tobias Billström says no to the municipality's requirements, saying that the government should not determine how a court will judge.

Sveriges Radio 3 May 2010 (in Swedish)

<http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=86&artikel=3668995>

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