

# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A daily press review with summaries of asylum and refugee-related articles in regional media.

Wednesday 1 November 2006

## Denmark

### Tamil orphan granted residency

The 15-year-old orphan, Rems, who was about to be deported to his native country of Sri Lanka before the UN intervened with a direct appeal to the Danish immigration authorities has now been granted permanent residency in this country. According to the boy's lawyer, the Refugee Board has granted dispensation because of the risks involved if he returned home. The UNHCR has warned against forcing Tamils to return home because of the violence and unrest in Sri Lanka.

(JP 1 November 2006 Translation by News Express,

<http://www.jp.dk/indland/artikel:aid=4053112/>)

## Finland

### Human traffickers arrested in Sweden

Swedish Police has arrested seven people suspected of human trafficking from Denmark to Sweden over the weekend. Some twenty Iraqis are now applying for asylum in Sweden. The increasing violence in Iraq has led to an increase of asylum seekers to the Nordic countries, and consequently to an increase in attempts of human trafficking as well. According to police, the Iraqis were transported to Sweden in cars and forced to pay thousands of euros for the transport.

(Helsingin Sanomat 1 November 2006

<http://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/artikkeli/lhmissalakuljettajia+pid%C3%A4tettiin+Ruotsissa/1135222675885>

## Norway

### Police raid asylum centre

The Norwegian police raided an asylum centre in Sandnes near Stavanger on Wednesday. 56 asylum seekers are being investigated and police are searching the centre for travel documents and identification papers. The aim is to find out where the asylum seekers come from, as most have been denied asylum and police is uncertain where to deport them. The asylum centre is one of the largest in Norway.

(Dagsavisen 1 November 2006 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2383908.ece>)

### Refugee worked ten years without holiday

The municipality of Tromsø has been reported for having a Somali refugee work 24-hour shifts for ten years without holidays, free weekends and for a small assistant salary.

Marte Madslie, solicitor for the national employees' organization, has taken the case to the police, saying the municipality has taken advantage of the Somali and has been well aware of the situation. The Somali was taking care of 10-15 refugee children at an

orphanage in Tromsø, today nine people have been hired to do the work he was carrying out alone.

(NRK 1 November 2006

[http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/troms\\_og\\_finnmark/1.1245892](http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/troms_og_finnmark/1.1245892)

### **Kurdish refugees still living in uncertainty**

The scandal around the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) and the case of a group of Kurds continues. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration was heavily criticized last year for the handling of a group of Kurdish asylum seekers from Northern Iraq, with three directors being forced to resign. Minister of Integration and Social Inclusion Bjarne Håkon Hanssen is now working on legislation deciding how their applications should be handled.

The Kurds arrived in 1999 and were denied asylum. While waiting to be able to return home, the Kurds were granted temporary residency without the right to family reunification.

In 2005 it was decided that only Kurds with a job and a possibility to provide for themselves would be allowed to stay in Norway. Some 800 asylum applications were under scrutiny, with some 500 Kurds who were working being granted residency and 100 were denied it. To solve the situation for 197 Kurds unable to provide for themselves, the Directorate of Immigration granted them residency permits based on humanitarian reasons, coming under heavy criticism for not having political backing for the decision. The 197 Kurds are still living in uncertainty in reception centres in Norway, some having lived there for seven years awaiting a decision on their asylum applications.

(NRK 1 November 2006 <http://www.nrk.no/programmer/tv/brennpunkt/1.1242237>

<http://www.nrk.no/programmer/tv/brennpunkt/1.1241865>)

### **Children suffer from years of waiting in reception centres**

Almost 300 children have lived in a Norwegian reception centre for more than three years. Sejdefa Kurgas spent over five years living in one in Bergen, from the age of eleven to sixteen. She says children suffer from living in reception centers for such a long time. Kurgas and her family spent years applying for permanent residency and in 2005 they were finally able to move into an apartment. Kurgas, interviewed for the Norwegian Television programme Brennepunkt, describes the time in the reception centre as extremely straining. Many suffered from psychological problems, parents were unable to take care of their children and the children were hit worst as they felt they were left to take care of themselves.

(NRK 31 October 2006 <http://www.nrk.no/programmer/tv/brennpunkt/1.1242541>)

## **Sweden**

### **Sweden deporting Eritreans again**

For the first time in two years, Sweden intends to deport a refugee from Eritrea. The decision by the Swedish Migration Board has been met with protests from UNHCR and Amnesty. According to Amnesty, Sweden is the only country that deports refugees back to Eritrea.

(SVT 1 November 2006)

### **Marriage immigration proving expensive**

Immigration from Denmark to the southern provinces in Sweden is proving expensive to the municipalities. Immigrants who are married to Danish citizens are not considered

refugees in Sweden and therefore the municipalities do not receive state grants when they move to Sweden with their Danish spouses. Some 100 people have arrived in the municipality of Landskrona during this year alone, and they are, according to Swedish law, entitled to language training. The municipalities now want the issue raised in parliament.

(SR 1 November 2006 <http://www.sr.se/cgi-bin/malmo/nyheter/artikel.asp?Artikel=1011697>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Thursday 2 November 2006

## Denmark

### **Sri Lankan boy provokes new immigration debate**

Minister of Refugees, Immigrants and Immigration Rikke Hvilshøj denies that she bowed to media pressure when she granted a 15-year-old Sri Lankan boy permanent residency after previously backing efforts to deport him. According to the minister, the boy was only allowed to stay because of a new UNHCR evaluation of the conditions in Sri Lanka. Despite her claim, a number of politicians, both from the opposition and the government, have criticised the government's immigration and residency policies as 'inhumane'. 'It's a cause for concern when we see that it takes a week-long media blitz to persuade the immigration authorities to change their mind,' said the Social Democrats' spokeswoman on immigration Lotte Bundsgaard. 'We need consistency in our immigration legislation, but it has to be fair.'

(Politiken 2 November 2006, translation by News Express)

### **Somali avoids deportation**

A Somali man, due to be deported for criminal offences, will be allowed to stay in Denmark. The decision by a local court to deport the man was overruled by a county court on Thursday. Another criminal sentence will, however, mean immediate deportation. The man was one of the first to be judged according to the conditioned sentencing put in place earlier this year. The conditioned sentencing was introduced as a warning to foreigners who commit crimes in Denmark.

(Jyllandsposten 2 November 2006

<http://www.jp.dk/indland/artikel:aid=4055176/>)

## Norway

### **Poverty in reception centres**

Families living in reception centres receive half the welfare benefits compared to other welfare beneficiaries. Many are so poor that the children suffer. According to research by the Norwegian Social Research (NOVA), the lack of money deprives children in reception centres of contact with other children, language training and social interaction.

(NRK 2 November 2006

<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/innenriks/1.1246813>)

### **Kurds expect asylum decision after seven years**

After seven years of temporary residency permits, a group of 197 Northern Iraqi Kurds are hoping to get a decision on whether they can stay or not from the Norwegian government. The ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion will make its decision based on the same criteria as in other asylum cases, despite the politically sensitive situation.

But it will also take the situation in Iraq and time spent in Norway into account. The government is due to make a decision before Christmas.

(Aftenposten 2 November 2006

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article1517434.ece>)

## Sweden

### **Number of asylum seekers expected to rise**

According to the latest estimates by the Swedish Migration Board, the number of asylum seekers arriving in Sweden is expected to rise. This year 22 000 people are expected to apply for asylum, the estimate for next year is 25 000. The rise in numbers is mainly due to the increase in refugees arriving from Iraq, Somalia and Lebanon. The Migration Board also expects to grant more asylum seekers the right to stay. (SR 2 November 2006 <http://www.sr.se/Ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=1013455>)

### **Concern over Swedish asylum policy**

The government is basing its estimates for the cost of asylum reception on unreasonable calculations, writes Janna Valik, Director General for the Swedish Migration Board, in a letter to the government. The government estimates the number of asylum seekers to decrease and therefore the budget for the Migration Board, for next year, has been cut. The Migration Board, however, makes very different estimates and Valik warns that the cutbacks can have serious consequences for Swedish asylum policy.

(Sydsvenskan 2 November 2006 <http://sydsvenskan.se/sverige/article193443.ece>)

### **Government criticised for closing integration committee**

Today the new centre-right government is scrapping the parliamentary integration policy committee that was tasked on 1 September 2005 with reviewing the goals, implementation and organisation of the Swedish integration policy. In today's DN, the committee's independent chairman Leif Magnusson and secretary Qaisar Mahmood write that the only explanation for the hasty decision is that Minister for Integration Nyamko Sabuni and the new government want to signal that everything done by the old government pertaining to integration was a failure. They also warn that minister Sabuni is turning her back on important information provided by the commission. The committee's work is 75% complete.

(Dagens Nyheter 2 November 2006, translation by Press Review)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Friday 3 November 2006

## Denmark

### **Asylum children lose out in last round of budget negotiations**

After a heavy round of negotiations, the final part of the budget has now been agreed upon. Initially funds were given for improving conditions for the children of asylum seekers, but as political parties were unable to reach an agreement the money will instead go to psychiatry. The opposition would have preferred to see the money spent on asylum children, but on better living conditions and not on toys and summer camps as proposed by the government and Danish People's Party (DF).

(Politiken 3 November 2006, translation by News Express)

## Norway

### **Iraqi Kurds get permission to stay**

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) has announced that the 197 Iraqi Kurds with temporary residence permits are most likely to be granted permanent permits. UDI did however emphasize that each case would be reviewed individually, but said that generally it looks as if they will receive permission to stay.

(Dagsavisen, 3 November 2006,

<http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2388436.ece>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Saturday 4 to Monday 6 November 2006

## Norway

### **Refugees leave countryside for cities**

Several municipalities in Norway have noted that immigrants and refugees leave the countryside municipalities as soon as they have completed the introduction courses. The main reasons are the lack of social contacts and job opportunities as well as the possibilities for religious participation. (NRK, 5 November 2004  
[http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/nrk\\_sogn\\_og\\_fjordane/1.1271056](http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/nrk_sogn_og_fjordane/1.1271056))

### **Several arrests in police raid on reception centre**

12 people were arrested in the police raid on Dale reception centre last Thursday. The aim of the raid was to find identification papers and travel documents in order to enable the police to deport the rejected asylum seekers living there and find persons staying in the centre despite having been denied asylum. Six of the arrested have been deported over the weekend and one person has been released. (NRK, 2-4 November 2006,  
<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/rogaland/1.1245701>  
<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/rogaland/1.1261571>)

### **NOAS: Time spent in Norway must be taken into account**

“The state must take responsibility and grant residence permits to asylum seekers that have spent over five years living illegally in Norway due to a stricter asylum policy”, says Morten Tjessem Secretary General at the Norwegian Organisation for Aylum Seekers (NOAS). He argues that five years in Norway should in itself be a ground for residency permit. (NRK, 3 November 2006 <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/rogaland/1.1271546>)

### **Police deny brutality in raid**

The police deny having used brutal methods when raiding the Dale reception centre. The Norwegian Psychological Association (NPA) criticizes the actions of the police, saying children could have been severely traumatized. The NPA says the police have to find other methods to find those staying illegally in reception centres, than a full scale invasion. (NRK, 3 November 2006,  
<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/rogaland/nord-jaeren/1.1258752>)

### **“Disabled refugees are discriminated against”**

According to the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi), the municipalities in Norway are discriminating against refugees with physical disabilities or psychological problems by refusing to accept these due to the expenses involved in their care. Some have been forced to wait in reception centres for years. The state has granted additional funding to make sure refugees with disabilities do not have to stay in the reception centres. The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Government (KS) says the state should take responsibility and make sure refugees are placed in

municipalities as soon as possible. (NRK, 4 November 2006, <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/innenriks/1.1266068>)

**Labour Party: Actions needed to help disabled refugees**

The Labour Party in Norway promises actions for getting refugees with physical disabilities or psychological problems out of the reception centres. Arild Stokkan Grande, spokesperson on immigration policy for the Labour party, says the placement of refugees must proceed faster. The Labour Party is also promising more money to solve the situation.

(NRK, 5 November 2006, <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/innenriks/1.1267695>)

## Sweden

**RFSL: Lesbian refugee granted residency on wrong reasons**

A lesbian refugee from Bangladesh has been granted a one year temporary residency permit in Sweden. During this time she has to prove her identity in order to obtain a permanent residency permit. The decision of the Migration Board is, however, not based on her sexual orientation, but on humanitarian reasons. The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights (RFSL) is critical to the decision. They feel the decision has been based on the wrong reasons, her sexual orientation should be taken into account rather than basing a decision solely on humanitarian reasons. (Svenska Dagbladet, 5 November 2006)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A daily press review with summaries of asylum and refugee-related articles in regional media.  
**Wednesday 8 November 2006**

## Denmark

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## Norway

## Sweden

<http://www.berlingske.dk/indland/artikel:aid=820620/>

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Wednesday 8 – Thursday 9 November 2006

## Denmark

### **Danish government disregards UN recommendations on refugees**

A number of experts accuse Denmark for listening to UN recommendations only when it fits its own interest. Unlike the Sri Lankan boy who, in the very last minute, was allowed to stay in Denmark after the UN sent a fax to the Danish government, 100 Roma from Kosovo and almost 600 Iraqis are very likely to be sent back. This despite that the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, believes the areas to be too dangerous for them to return to. Minister of Integration, Rikke Hvilshøj, rejects the criticism, saying that Denmark is allowed to have its own opinion in the matter.

(DR, 9 November, <http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/11/09/073439.htm>)

## Norway

### **Afghans to be deported have disappeared**

Less than a half of the 200 Afghans that are to be deported before Christmas have been sent home yet. While 48 have been forcibly returned and another 30 have returned voluntarily, the rest seem to have either left Norway or disappeared within the country. The target to deport the 200 Afghans originating from the Kabul district is therefore not likely to be reached, reports the Norwegian police department responsible for asylum issues. (Dagsavisen & NRK, 9 November,

<http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2400246.ece>,

<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/innenriks/1.1292037>)

### **Fear of terrorism creates bank problems for refugees**

A Norwegian directive, targeted at combating terrorism, is making it difficult for refugees and asylum-seekers to access their bank accounts. Luchia Ogbamicael from Eritrea has only an asylum-seeking certificate and an Eritrean passport and is therefore unable to withdraw money from her account, as only Norwegian passports are accepted as valid identification. (Dagsavisen, 9 November 2006,

<http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2400709.ece>)

## Sweden

### **Danish seek help in Sweden**

Both Swedish and Danish newspapers report that half of the abused women who seek help at the crisis centre in the Swedish town Malmö actually reside in Denmark. This is due to a recent tightening of Danish immigration legislation, which does not regard marriage with a Danish citizen as grounds for granting residence permits to non-European women under the age of 24, as is the case in Sweden. Swedish Minister for

Integration and Asylum Policy Tobias Billström is to travel to Copenhagen to discuss the problem with his Danish counterpart Rikke Hvilshøj.

Dagens Nyheter, 8 November, translation by Swedish Press Review,  
<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=147&a=586863&previousRenderType=2>,  
and Berlingske 8 November 2006,  
<http://www.berlingske.dk/indland/artikel:aid=820620/>)

### **UN condemns deportations of Egyptians**

The UN Commission on Human Rights says Sweden violated a ban on torture when it in December 2001 deported Mohammed Alzery from Bromma airport. The two Egyptians Mohammed Alzery and Ahmed Agiza were arrested in 2001 and deported in a CIA plane to Cairo, only a few hours after their applications for asylum had been rejected. The Commission also urges Sweden to make changes to its judicial system so that people guilty of such acts in the future can be made responsible for them. (Dagens Nyheter, 9 November 2006,  
<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=147&a=587008&previousRenderType=1>,  
translation by Swedish Press Review)

### **Swedish Migration Board and Migration Court get told off**

The Swedish Migration Court of Appeal is granting a 29-year-old pregnant woman from the Philippines a residence permit. Both the decisions by the Swedish Migration Board and the Migration Court are thereby overruled as they ordered the woman to leave the country.

(Dagens Nyheter, 9 November 2006)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Friday 10 November 2006

## Finland

### **Call for reform of immigration administration**

According to Liisa Jaakonsaari (Social Democrats), chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Finnish Parliament, authorities in Finland have failed with the integration of immigrants and in the battle against racism and intolerance. The Foreign Affairs Committee states that Finland has been lacking a goal-oriented immigration policy. In Finland, the immigration, asylum and refugee issues are divided between the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Foreign Affairs Committee feels the system is not functioning appropriately and calls for a reform of the administration.

(YLE 9 November 2006

## Norway

### **Police officer had sex with woman facing deportation**

A male police officer working at the department responsible for asylum issues is being investigated after he is believed to have had sex with a woman awaiting deportation. He is thereby running a risk of being imprisoned for five years. The incident is believed to have taken place just before the woman was to be deported last summer.

(NRK & Aftenposten, 10 November 2006,

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Saturday 11 to Monday 13 November 2006

## Denmark

### **Danish Refugee Council raises 2, 3 million USD**

The Danish Refugee Council collected some 13, 5 million Danish crowns (USD 2,3 million) in its annual collection. The funds will go to help refugees in Liberia and in other parts in Africa. Altogether 13,000 volunteers participated in the collection. (DR, 13 November, <http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/11/13/050708.htm>)

## Norway

### **UNHCR praises Norwegian decision on Somalia**

UNHCR praises Norway's decision to stop deporting asylum-seekers to Somalia. "These Somalis would have faced a very difficult situation if they had to return home now," Ms. Machiko Kondo, Regional Representative for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said. According to Kondo, UNHCR advises not refrain from deporting people to Somalia until it is safe to return. Instead, refugees from Somalia should be offered some form of complementary protection. (NRK, 10 November, <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/innenriks/1.1304725>)

### **Asylum seeking children discriminated against**

Minister of Children and Equality; Karita Bekkemellem (Labour Party) will pass on the care of asylum-seeking children under the age of 15 to the child welfare authorities after heavy criticism of the way asylum-seeking children are treated in Norway. "Children applying for asylum in Norway are treated as second class children, they are discriminated against", says lawyer Rikke Lassen. Lassen has been part of a team looking at the legal rights of the children. According to Lassen, all children under the age of 18 should be in the hands of child welfare authorities. (NRK 12 November, <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/innenriks/1.1307149>, <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/innenriks/1.1309024>)

## Sweden

### **Billström's trafficking law criticized**

The proposal of the Minister for Migration Tobias Billström to offer permanent residence to victims of trafficking agreeing to witness against human traffickers, has aroused strong criticism. The socialist parties have opposed it and legal experts point out that the proposal could create legal problems. Critics of the proposal fear that it could lead to a situation where women already being in a vulnerable position could be used again. They say witnessing must not become a requirement for citizenship. From a legal

perspective, such a method allows the defense lawyer to question the validity of such evidence. (Dagens Nyheter, SVT, SR, 13 November, translation by Swedish Press Review)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Tuesday 14 November 2006

## Denmark

### **Minister rejects human rights criticism**

Minister of Refugees, Immigrants and Immigration, Rikke Hvilshøj says the Institute for Human Rights should withdraw its allegation that Danish immigration legislation is in conflict with International Human Rights. "It's obvious that the institute's criticism last year was based on incomplete and wrong information", says Hvilshøj. The Institute for Human Rights claimed that Denmark had in seven separate cases violated European human rights legislation by denying residency via family reunification. (Jyllandsposten 14 November, translation by News Express, <http://www.jp.dk/indland/artikel:aid=4078326/>)

### **Deported foreigners stay in Denmark**

Some 500 criminal foreigners are required to leave Denmark every year after having served their sentence. One tenth of them, however, never actually leave the country. Some disappear while others are left waiting for the receiving country to accept them. According to Danish law, the time spent in Denmark affects the sentence; the longer a person has lived in Denmark the harder the crime has to be in order to qualify for deportation. In addition humanitarian conditions and family ties need to be taken into account. (DR 14 November, <http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/11/14/001058.htm>)

### **Police to deport Romanys again**

After three years, the Danish National Police is again attempting to deport Romany asylum seekers to Kosovo. According to UNHCR guidelines, Romanys are still in danger in Kosovo and countries are advised not to deport them. According to the immigration department at the Danish National Police, no asylum seekers are deported back to Kosovo without the approval of the UN office in Kosovo. There are some 200-120 Romany refugees from Kosovo applying for asylum in Denmark. (Politiken 14 November, <http://politiken.dk/indland/article199177.ece>)

## Sweden

### **Concern raises as Swedish Democrats enter Migration Court**

The right wing Swedish Democrats Party is to fill twenty seats in the regional court in the province of Skåne. The regional court is one of the three Migration Courts in Sweden and concern is now rising as to how this will affect the decisions in cases where people have a foreign background. (SVT 14 November 2006 [http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=22620&a=700280&lid=puff\\_700310&lpos=lasmer](http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=22620&a=700280&lid=puff_700310&lpos=lasmer))

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Wednesday 15 November 2006

## Denmark

### **Paralyzed to be deported to Turkey**

A paralyzed woman is to be deported back to Turkey from Denmark. Her husband and three children have permits to stay in Denmark, but as the woman arrived in Denmark only one year ago, Minister of integration Rikke Hvilshøj says there are no grounds for granting the woman residency. The family has more ties to Turkey than to Denmark and therefore the case does not qualify for family reunification.

(DR 14 November, <http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/11/14/194937.htm>)

### **Institute for Human Rights maintains criticism**

The Danish Institute for Human Rights maintains its criticism of the Danish immigration legislation, first published in a White Book last year. The Institute claims that Denmark has in seven separate cases violated European human rights legislation by denying residency via family reunification. The Ministry of Integration, on Wednesday, published a statement with results of an investigation that shows that Denmark follows all international conventions. The investigation was commissioned after the publishing of the White Book. (Politiken 15 November, <http://politiken.dk/indland/article199784.ece>)

## Estonia

### **Nationalist organization attacks Estonia's integration program**

The Estonian National Movement (ERL) has attacked the integration program approved by the government. According to ERL, Estonia must toughen the principles for granting citizenship and say all stateless residents of Estonia are under international law citizens of Russia. Instead of offering them Estonian citizenship, the government must demand Russia to formally give them Russian citizenship. The integration program of the Estonian society has been set up for the years 2008-2013. (Baltic News Express 15 November 2006)

## Norway

### **Concerns over refugee community in Arendal**

Parts of the refugee society in Arendal in Norway are in a severe crisis, says an immigrant representative. Many families live isolated, and are unable to bring up their children as part of the Norwegian society. There is also a rising problem with incidents of gang violence. The municipality is now asked to intervene in order to make sure

immigrants are taught Norwegian and to prevent further gang mentality. (NRK 15 November, <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/sorlandet/1.1322687>)

## Sweden

### **Swedish Democrats: Ok to interpret the law differently**

In January next year, 21 out of 312 laymen in the Migration Court in Skåne will be members of the right wing Swedish Democrat Party. As they will participate in cases involving refugees and asylum seekers, their presence in the court has been criticized. Party secretary for the Swedish Democrats, Björn Söder, says the party will not use its laymen seats to influence the refugee policy. He does, however, point out that different people interpret law in different ways.

(Sydsvenskan 14 November 2006 <http://sydsvenskan.se/skane/article196322.ece>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Thursday 16 November 2006

## Norway

### **Vegårshei an example of successful integration**

The municipality of Vegårshei in Norway is serving as an example of successful refugee integration. Nine out of ten refugees that have arrived since 2000 continue to live in the municipality. Representatives from the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDI) will now look into how the same practices could be used in other municipalities.

Representatives of Vegårshei say the key is employment and housing. In cooperation with banks, refugees have been offered loans for housing, a model which is of particular interest to IMDI. (NRK 16 November 2006

<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/sorlandet/1.1329957>)

### **Afghani asylum seekers living on the streets of Oslo**

Some 300-400 Afghan asylum seekers are hiding from the police in Oslo, according to estimates by Zahir Athari, spokesperson for the Afghan asylum seekers in Norway. After having been denied asylum the Afghans also lost their work permits. They are now forced into living on the streets and taking jobs where they are taken advantage of by employers paying as little as 20 NOK per hour (USD 3). The alternative is, however, life in a reception centre awaiting deportation to Afghanistan. (Dagsavisen 16 November, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2414427.ece>)

## Sweden

### **Hungarian asylum-seekers pour in**

In the past few weeks, 120 Hungarian citizens, most of them Roma, have sought asylum in Sweden. However, because they are EU citizens they will be referred to as asylum-seekers. The 27 cases tried have been rejected. "We are debating if there's reason to correct some misunderstandings in Hungary about the regulations of entry into Sweden", says Kent Öberg from MFA's press office. (Svenska Dagbladet 16 November, translation by Swedish Press Review)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A daily press review with summaries of asylum and refugee-related articles in regional media.

Friday 17 November 2006

## Norway

### **Aliens Act dividing parties**

The Norwegian Parliament is to discuss the proposal for a new Aliens Act after Christmas, forced marriages being one of the key issues. Minister for Labour and Social Inclusion, Bjarne Håkon Hanssen (Labour) wants stricter laws to prevent forced marriages but opposition parties have varied views on the proposal. The Progress Party calls for strict actions for example by setting an age limit of 24. The Socialist Left Party is against age limits for family reunification and the Conservative Party demands that the costs for family reunification should not be funded by public means. (Aftenposten 17 November <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/politikk/article1535716.ece>)

## Sweden

### **More critics of investigation into apathetic children**

Per-Anders Rydelius, professor in psychiatry, criticizes the investigation of apathetic children done by government coordinator Marie Hessle. Rydelius has looked into the problem on behalf of Stockholm County Council. According Rydelius, Hessle's statements in the investigation are all incorrect. She stated that there were no apathetic children in Sweden before 2000, they only exist in Sweden and there is no scientific definition of the problem. The government is currently awaiting the final report from Hessle. The investigation came under severe criticism after claims that the children's condition was a result of manipulation. There are some 200 apathetic, asylum-seeking children in Sweden. (SVT 17 November 2006 [http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=22620&a=702900&lid=senasteNytt\\_275214&lpos=ubrik\\_702900](http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=22620&a=702900&lid=senasteNytt_275214&lpos=ubrik_702900))

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Saturday 18 November – Monday 20 November 2006

## Latvia

### Letter to highlight human rights

The leftist bloc For Human Rights in United Latvia (PCTVL) will send a statement pointing at the violations of democracy in Latvia to the embassies of those state representatives expected to attend the NATO summit in Riga next week. The hope is to draw the attention of the participants to the situation of Latvia's non-citizens.

(Baltic News Service, 20 November)

## Sweden

### Mistake by police might lead to asylum

A married couple from Azerbaijan, who have applied for asylum seven times in Sweden, might now receive permission to stay. This after police in Azerbaijan has received crucial information concerning the couple's applications. Swedish police is accused of sharing such information when they deported the daughter of the couple.

(Dagens Nyheter, 20 November,

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=147&a=590030&previousRenderType=1>)

### Migration Courts receive criticism

The three Swedish Migration Courts have received criticism for not spending sufficient time on each asylum case. This after a Swedish news agency has looked closer at the Courts decisions. In 11 cases their decisions have been overruled by the Appeals Board. Minister of Migration, Tobias Billstrom, rejects the criticism by saying that the system is still relatively new to everyone, but promises to look into the matter.

(Svenska Dagbladet 19 November,

[http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/inrikes/did\\_14095496.asp](http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/inrikes/did_14095496.asp),

[http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=22620&a=704071&lid=senasteNytt\\_275214&lpos=rubrik\\_704071](http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=22620&a=704071&lid=senasteNytt_275214&lpos=rubrik_704071))

### Migration Board grants Sri Lankan family asylum

The Swedish Migration Board has granted the Kantarubans family from Sri Lanka asylum in Sweden. The family has had its case tried twice before in

Swedish court, and the reasons for the Migration Board to re-open their case and grant them asylum are not clear. The family's lawyer, Ingulf Flamborn, says however that her guess is that it is related to UNHCR, and the case with the 15-year-old Sri Lankan boy, who the Danish government granted asylum after the UN Refugee Agency intervened.

(Helsingborgs Dagblad, 20 November, <http://hd.se/helsingborg/2006/11/18/de-faar-stanna/>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Tuesday 21 November 2006

## Sweden

### **Two arrested for smuggling asylum seekers**

Early this morning two men were arrested for smuggling 14 Iraqis over the Swedish border in a minibus. When the vehicle was stopped by the police, the Iraqis announced they were applying for asylum. The case was thereby forwarded to the Migration Board. All involved will be interviewed by the authorities during the day.

(Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet, SVT, 21 November,  
<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=554&a=590506&previousRenderType=2>,  
[http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/inrikes/did\\_14115643.asp](http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/inrikes/did_14115643.asp),  
[http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=22620&a=705163&lid=senasteNytt\\_275214&lpos=rubrik\\_705163](http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=22620&a=705163&lid=senasteNytt_275214&lpos=rubrik_705163))

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Wednesday 22 November 2006

## Latvia

### **Leftists try to “save” naturalization from nationalists**

The opposition left-wing bloc For Human Rights in a United Latvia (PCTVL) has suggested that the Naturalization Board should be transferred to become the responsibility of the Special Ministry for Society Integration, rather than the Ministry of Justice. PCTVL came forth with this initiative only a few weeks after a member of the nationalist party, For Fatherland and Freedom, became Minister of Justice. The party has a very strict view on citizenship issues, seeking to restrict naturalization and make it possible to withdraw the citizenship from people disloyal to the Latvian state.

(Baltic News Service, 22 November)

## Norway

### **Norway sets out to find parents of unaccompanied children**

At the moment there are 128 unaccompanied children staying at a reception centre for asylum seekers in Norway. The Directorate of Immigration (UDI) is now putting in all efforts to try and find the parents of these children, as this was proven successful during last year’s pilot project. The parents of 7 unaccompanied children were then located in the home countries. UDI says this is to prevent families from using the children for attaining family reunion.

(Aftenposten, 22 November,

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article1541941.ece>)

### **Mullah Krekar faces deportation**

Former leader of Ansar al-Islam, Mullah Krekar, is to be deported from Norway. However, due to the present situation in Iraq the deportation will not take place immediately. The court also ruled Mullah Krekar to bear all legal costs.

(Aftenposten, 22 November,

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article1541705.ece>

<http://www.dagsavisen.no/article2427166.ece>)

## Sweden

### **Iraqi suspected of human smuggling**

A minibus with fourteen Iraqi refugees was stopped on the Swedish side of the Öresund bridge yesterday morning. One of the Iraqis was later arrested, suspected of smuggling human beings, while the Swiss driver was released. A spokesman for the Malmö police says to DN that customs stop four or five cars a week containing Iraqi refugees in the area, but this is the first time there have been so many in one vehicle.

(Dagens Nyheter, 22 November, translation by Swedish Press Review)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A daily press review with summaries of asylum and refugee-related articles in regional media.

Thursday 23 November 2006

## Finland

### **Finnish children misinformed about refugees**

A poll commissioned by UNICEF, shows Finnish secondary school students lack knowledge about their basic rights. It also shows children are misinformed about refugees. More than 40 percent believe that Finland has taken in as many or more refugees than other EU countries. Another 40 percent say that there are too many refugees in Finland.

Finland takes in far fewer refugees per capita than the EU average.

Helsingin Sanomat, 22 November, ,

<http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/artikkeli/Puolet+yI%C3%A4asteik%C3%A4isist%C3%A4+sallisi+lapsen+tukistamisen/1135223107157>

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A daily press review with summaries of asylum and refugee-related articles in regional media.

Friday 24 – Monday 27 November 2006

## ***Denmark***

### **Supreme Court decides on deportation**

In a few days the Danish Supreme Court will decide whether the mother of a one-year-old baby will be deported back to China or not. Both previous instances have ruled against her, as she is guilty of having issued false documents for Chinese asylum seekers. Yet a deportation would go against the best interest of the child.

(Jyllands-Posten, 26 November, <http://www.jp.dk/indland/artikel:aid=4101658/>)

## ***Finland***

### **Escalating violence in Chad**

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres, said hundreds of thousands of people, including refugees who have fled from Darfur, are threatened by the escalating violence in Chad. According to UNHCR estimates, over 218,000 people have fled from Darfur to Chad. (Helsingin Sanomat 25 November

<http://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/artikkeli/Tadissa+vallattu+kaupunki+takaisin+hallitukselle/1135223240447>)

## ***Sweden***

### **Witness in procurement case allowed to stay**

The young girl who testified in the procurement case in Skåne will be able to stay in Sweden after the Swedish Migration Board revoked a decision to deport her. The girl was just 16 when she was brought to Sweden from Romania by a man from Skåne. Her testimony was a key to the man's conviction and prison sentence for human smuggling and procurement. (Dagens Nyheter 27 November, translation by Swedish Press Review)

### **Human smugglers taken into custody**

Late last night the police stopped two German-registered vehicles, which contained five Iraqi refugees, three of them children. These have now been handed over to the Migration Board in Gothenburg in Sweden. (Dagens Nyheter, 27 November,

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=147&a=592193&previousRenderType=2>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A daily press review with summaries of asylum and refugee-related articles in regional media.

**Tuesday 28 November 2006**

## ***Denmark***

### **Sweden questions Danish immigration legislation**

Strict Danish immigration legislation has led to a considerable rise in the number of asylum seekers heading for Sweden, where residency requirements are far less restrictive. Armed with figures showing that Sweden will accept around 20,000 asylum seekers this year, compared to Denmark's 2,500, Sweden's Minister of Integration Tobias Billström is now pushing for a pan-Nordic agreement that will disperse refugees and asylum seekers throughout the region in a more fair and balanced manner. During a Copenhagen meeting with his Danish counterpart Rikke Hvilshøj, Mr Billström said: "It's not just about sharing responsibility, but about solving the problem too." (Jyllandsposten, 28 November, translation by News Express)

## ***Lithuania***

### **Lithuania may receive illegal immigrants from Malta**

The Lithuanian cabinet is to propose a resolution making it possible for Lithuania to receive a group of six refugees who have arrived illegally and applied for asylum in Malta. Over 950 illegal immigrants have arrived in Malta during the first half of this year and the Maltese government is asking for EU countries to help solve the problem. (Baltic News Service, 28 November)

## ***Sweden***

### **One woman killed when refugee center caught fire**

A refugee center caught fire last night, wounding several and leaving one woman dead. Some 30 to 40 people will now have to leave the centre. What caused the fire is still not known.

(Dagens Nyheter 28 November,

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=147&a=592503&previousRenderType=1>)

### **Billström meets Danish colleague**

Minister for Integration Tobias Billström yesterday met with his Danish colleague Rikke Hvilshøj to discuss the restrictive Danish marriage law which has meant that crisis help centers in Sweden have had to take in many women married to

Danish citizens with a foreign background. Since April Sweden introduced an EU directive into the Aliens' Act, saying that everyone who lives in Sweden may marry a foreign citizen and that the foreign citizen will be granted a two-year residence permit to begin with. Denmark requested exemption from this regulation and the requirement remains that foreign citizens must be aged 24 or over if they want to marry someone who lives in Denmark.  
(Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet 28 November, translation by Swedish Press Review)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A daily press review with summaries of asylum and refugee-related articles in regional media.

Thursday 20,29, 30 November 2006

## ***Denmark***

### **Denmark receives fewer immigrants than predicted.**

A new study by an independent analysis firm has found that predictions of soaring increases in the percentage of immigrants living in Denmark was a serious over-assessment. In 2001, the government's commission on social welfare reform forecast that immigrants from non-Western countries would rise to 18 percent of Denmark's population by 2080. At that time, the group made up 5 percent of the population. Figures from the DREAM analysis institute suggest that the number of immigrants will only rise to 8 percent by 2080. The most recent figures from Statistics Denmark indicate that immigrants and their children make up 8.7 percent of the population, while those from non-Western countries make up 6.1 percent. Lower immigration rates resulting from stricter policies will force the government to re-evaluate its social welfare reforms.

(Jyllandsposten 30 November 2006

[http://www.jp.dk/english\\_news/artikel:aid=4109928/](http://www.jp.dk/english_news/artikel:aid=4109928/))

## ***Finland***

### **Finland meets only one tenth of refugee quota for this year**

Disagreements between the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of the Interior have significantly slowed down the selection of refugees to be settled in Finland on the basis of the annual quota. So far this year Finland has taken in 75 quota refugees, one tenth of the annual quota of 750. The ministries make their decisions on where the quota refugees should come from, based on options put forward by the UNHCR. A delegation from the Ministry of Labour visited Thailand recently and has made a proposal for settling 385 refugees from Myanmar in Finland. Another delegation is scheduled to leave for Turkey to choose 150 Iranian and Iraqi refugees.

(Helsingin Sanomat 30 November 2006

<http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Finland+meets+only+one+tenth+of+refugee+quota+for+this+year/1135223378939>)

## ***Latvia***

### **Increased control of Latvian border to last till end of year**

An increased control on the Latvian border, introduced because of the NATO summit, is to last till the end of the year. The decision was made based on the large number of detained people during the increased border control period and an analysis of the illegal

immigration threats, especially from Moldova and Ukraine. The increased border control was introduced on October 1st and 1,370 people have been detained on the Latvian border for various offences since.

(Baltic News Service 30 November 2006)

#### **Russian torture of refugees confirmed by doctors**

A group of 21 refugees from Chechnya living in Norway have suffered both physical and psychological torture; this has been confirmed by a group of Danish doctors from Amnesty International. The refugees say the torture has been inflicted by Russian police and military personnel. Many suffer from nightmares, sleeping problems and concentration problems as well as physical problems and injuries. (Aftenposten, 29 November 2006 <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/article1549616.ece>)

#### **Asylum seeker fears for his life as documents are shared**

An asylum seeker from Rwanda fears for his life as the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration has provided the UN with his asylum documents and interviewees conducted with the man. He fears the identities of those that helped him flee Rwanda, have ended up in the hands of the Rwandan government. Abdul Joshua Ruzibiza arrived in Norway in 2003 and is still awaiting a decision on his asylum application in a secret location. Ruzibiza is Tutsi and wrote a book about the genocide accusing the Rwandan government of large-scale war crimes. He is a central witness in the UN Rwanda tribunal. (Aftenposten 20 November 2006 <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/article1549598.ece>)

## ***Sweden***

#### **International peace force to be placed in Chad**

Chad has accepted an international peace force to be placed in the eastern parts of country to prevent the violence in the Darfur region in Sudan to spread across the boarder. Over 200 000 Sudanese refugees from Darfur are living in UNHCR refugee camps in eastern Chad. In the same area some 90 000 Chadians have been forced to flee their homes due to increased violence. (Svenska Dagbladet 30 November 2006 [http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/utrikes/did\\_14180332.asp](http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/utrikes/did_14180332.asp))

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