

Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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

Denmark

Asylum seekers disappear before deportation

43 out of a total of 124 Kosovo-Albanian asylum seekers who were denied asylum and are to be deported, had disappeared from Danish asylum centres when police came to collect them. According to the police, some of them are in hiding while others have traveled to Germany or Sweden. (Politiken 2 October 2006, <http://politiken.dk/indland/article180175.ece>)

Immigration statistics criticized

Eyvind Vesslebo, cultural sociologist and member of the Liberal Party, calls for a change in the current immigration statistics as they give a false picture of the immigration problems by not including third-generation immigrants. According to Vesslebo, the statistics are not comprehensive and understate the problems. Minister of Education, Bertel Haarder, intends to look into the matter. (Berlingske Tidende and DR 1 October 2006, <http://www.berlingske.dk/indland/artikel:aid=800788/> <http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/10/01/215311.htm> <http://www.berlingske.dk/indland/artikel:aid=800704/>)

Imprisoned asylum seekers commit suicide more often

Since 2001, five imprisoned asylum seekers have committed suicide in Denmark. The number constitutes 15 percent of the suicides in Danish prisons between 2001 and 2005, although asylum seekers represent only a small number of prisoners. According to Jørgen Chemnitz from the Danish Red Cross, these are a very alarming figures and the issue needs serious consideration. (Politiken 2 October 2006, <http://politiken.dk/indland/article180364.ece>)

Somali organization bombed

The office of a Somali organization in the city of Århus was subject to a bombing on Saturday night. The blast destroyed the door of the office and damaged the premises. One person was in the office at the time and became severely shocked but not injured. The Police do not know what caused the explosion. (Politiken 1 October 2006, <http://politiken.dk/indland/article180301.ece>)

Illegal immigrants arrested

Over the weekend Danish border control arrested 17 Iraqis at the border between Denmark and Germany trying to enter Denmark illegally, with four of them being arrested on suspicion of human trafficking. (DR 2 October 2006, <http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/10/02/133249.htm>)

Red Cross Volunteers collect millions

The Red Cross fundraising drive on Sunday resulted in some 23 million Danish crowns (3,9 million USD). Jørgen Poulsen, the Secretary General of the Red Cross, was very

happy with the result. While a major portion of last year's funds went to earthquake victims in Pakistan, this year's collection will most likely be earmarked for relief efforts in Sudan's Darfur province. (DR and Copenhagen Post 2 October 2006, <http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/10/01/184352.htm>, <http://www.cphpost.dk/get/98237.html>)

Brothers avoid deportation

Two Palestinian brothers will not be deported after having served their sentence for killing an 18-year old man. The Danish Supreme Court changed a previous decision by a local court to deport the brothers. The Supreme Court found that the brothers have no real connection to Jordan or Lebanon and that they cannot be deported despite the crime they have committed.

(DR 2 October 2006,

<http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/kriminalitet/2006/10/02/133102.htm>)

Finland

President Halonen: Immigrant women need attention

Finnish President Tarja Halonen expressed her concern for the integration of immigrant women, their equality and possibilities to take part in society. The president was speaking at the 100th anniversary for women's rights to vote and stand for election Finland. The president pointed to research showing that immigrant women are not integrated into society as well as men and they are more often unemployed. (Helsingin Sanomat 1 October 2006

<http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/artikkeli/Halonen+V%C3%A4hemmist%C3%B6ryhmien+naisia+ei+saa+unohtaa/1135222011161>)

Norway

Terrorist suspects expelled from Norway

Norwegian authorities have over the past few years secretly expelled several foreign citizens, because they were suspected of having ties with terrorist groups. Several men have been expelled from Norway following investigations into the terrorist network GSPC, which resulted in several arrests in Italy and France. At the time, the Norwegian Secret Police reportedly assisted Italian authorities in surveillance and phone-tapping of terrorist suspects' contacts in Norway. This resulted in the expulsion of a number of persons from Norway.

(NRK and Norway Post 2 October 2006, <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/utenriks/1.1061723> <http://www.norwaypost.no/cgi-bin/norwaypost/imaker?id=28726>)

Immigrant organizations accuse police of being racist

A group of organizations representing immigrants has filed a complaint to the government over, what they see as, racism in the police force. The complaint follows a recent incident in Trondheim where a Nigerian man was killed during arrest. Police are accused of harassing colored persons by pointless controls and brutal handling.

(Dagsavisen 2 October 2006), <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2324322.ece>)

Sweden

Chaos in Iraq causes new asylum wave

Almost twice as many Iraqis have applied for asylum in Sweden this year compared to last year, according to fresh data from the Swedish Migration Board. At the end of August, 12,988 individuals had applied for asylum in Sweden, 30 per cent of whom came from Iraq. Krister Isaksson, analyst at the Migration Board, says that with the chaos in Iraq, many Iraqis are seeking asylum in Sweden since they already have relatives, friends and acquaintances in the country. In contrast to the situation in Sweden, fewer applications for asylum are being made in the rest of Europe. According to the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, asylum applications are down by 20 per cent in the EU as a whole, during the first six months of the year.

(Swedish Press Review, SVT 2 October 2006,
<http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=22620&a=670971>)

Legal loophole allows foreign criminals to return

A legal loophole may make it possible for deported foreign criminals to return to Sweden without risk of being arrested. A case involving a Danish citizen who returned to Sweden despite being deported in 2003 will now be handled in the Supreme Court. The man was arrested under the 1989 Aliens Act and as there was no provisional regulation in place, his case was not covered by the new Act, drawn up in 2005. The new Act only applies to people convicted under the new law and this means all persons convicted under the old law may return to Sweden with impunity. (SVT, DN and The Local 2 October 2006,

<http://www.thelocal.se/article.php?ID=5086&date=20061002&PHPSESSID=d5a40c7dc067f6d4a15c3bd87c47269b>)

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Tuesday 3 October 2006

Denmark

Asylum-seeking children suffer from changes

A new report from the Danish Institute of Social Research shows that constant change creates distress for children in asylum centres. Many asylum-seeking children are moved from one centre to another as their applications are processed. On average, a child has to move six times during this process, and maintaining a normal life and friends are difficult. Children also suffer from having to live with parents incapable of looking after them, due to psychological or physiological problems.

(Jyllands-Posten 2 October 2006, <http://www.jp.dk/indland/artikel:aid=3993764/>)

New discrimination board to be set up

The Danish government wants to set up a new discrimination board to replace the previously closed Board of Ethnic Equality. The new board will improve possibilities to file complaints in cases of discrimination based on ethnic origin. It will also take on cases where discrimination is based on other factors such as age, religion or sexual orientation. The board is expected to be operational by 2008.

(Politiken and Jyllandsposten 3 October 2006, <http://politiken.dk/indland/article181069.ece>
<http://www.jp.dk/indland/artikel:aid=3995800/>)

Bombing causing fear and delight

The bomb that was set off in the office of a Somali organization in Århus over the weekend is causing fear and concern amongst Muslims in Denmark. According to the Islamic League (FIF) the blast was an act of terrorism. The police haven't been able to identify the responsible for the attack. The nationalistic organization Dansk Front has expressed its delight over the bombing, however.

(Politiken 3 October 2006 <http://politiken.dk/indland/article181058.ece>)

Norway

Norwegian government will respect UN recommendations

The Norwegian government will rely more heavily on UN recommendations when making decisions on deporting rejected asylum seekers, says Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion Bjarne Håkon Hanssen. Morten Tjessem, Secretary General of the Norwegian Organisation for Asylum seekers (NOAS), feels it is high time the government follows up on its own policy declaration. 16 Somali asylum seekers have been denied asylum and returned back to southern Somalia despite the fact that it goes against UN recommendations and runs contrary to the Soria-Moria declaration where the government states that its refugee policies will be in accordance with UN's recommendations. Hanssen says now that the government intends to give more weight to UN recommendations in the future. On October 16, Hanssen will travel to Geneva to

meet with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. "Let's hope the meeting makes the government come to its senses and keep its word", says Tjessem. (NRK 3 October 2006, <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/innenriks/1.1070451>)

Sweden

Mother sentenced to imprisonment

A Motala district court has sentenced a 42-year-old woman to three years in prison for subjecting her 16-year-old daughter to genital mutilation during a visit to Somalia in 2001. A Swedish law banning female circumcision was tightened in 1990 and applies even if the act was carried out abroad. The decision in the Motala court is, however, only the second one of its kind since the legislation came into effect. (SR 3 October, <http://www.sr.se/cgi-bin/goteborg/nyheter/artikel.asp?Artikel=957332>)

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Wednesday 4 October 2006

Denmark

Report: Refugees live poorly

A report from the Centre for Alternative Social Analysis (CASA) shows that refugees in Denmark receive such a small amount of financial support that they are unable to uphold a decent standard of living. According to the interviews, every second family cannot afford to buy meat, fruit and vegetables, which especially affects the well-being of refugee children. Refugees are forced into isolation as well, as they cannot afford to take part in activities that would advance their integration.

(DR 4 October 2006, <http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/10/03/225326.htm>)

Minister of integration: Refugees can manage

Danish Minister of Integration, Rikke Hvilshøj finds the financial support given to refugees to be sufficient. According to the Minister, the key is that refugees become self-sufficient through employment and if refugees cannot survive with the provided start-up subsidy, they would be taken care of through other means. (Politiken 4 October 2006, <http://politiken.dk/indland/article181558.ece>)

Sweden

Rojas steps down as integration spokesman

Mauricio Rojas is to step down as the Liberal Party's spokesperson on integration after two years in the post. Mr Rojas says that it has been a tough job that has taken its toll on him and he has requested that he be given other duties. Mr Rojas has been seen as a controversial politician, calling for a tougher stance on integration. He has proposed that foreign citizens who have been sentenced to prison three times should be deported from Sweden, regardless of how long they have lived in the country. (DN, SPR translation 3 October 2006, <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=577548>)

Need for open immigration to Sweden

Lars O. Grönstedt, chairman of the major bank Handelsbanken and an influential person in the Swedish business sector, is calling for open immigration to Sweden. According to Grönstedt, free immigration would generate economic growth and open for a more humane attitude towards immigrants. He is turning to the new Swedish government for some major changes in the immigration policy. (SR 4 October 2006 <http://www.sr.se/Ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=958936>)

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Thursday 5 October 2006

Denmark

Prime Minister on road show for integration

Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen will travel around Denmark next week in order to strengthen the integration of immigrants. Five successful immigrants will join the Prime Minister on the bus tour, each one having a good education, job or successful business. The aim is to watch and learn but also show it is possible for immigrants to live, work and do well in Denmark.

(Berlingske 5 October 2006, <http://www.berlingske.dk/indland/artikel:aid=802578/>)

Norway

Norway expects more in return from the United Nations

The Norwegian government will increase Norway's grants to development and humanitarian activities by at least NOK 1.6 billion (243 million USD) in next year's budget. At the same time, Minister of International Development, Erik Solheim, is demanding more results from the UN. Solheim wants the UN to increase efforts in, among others, the fields of environment and gender equality and he also wants to see a larger number of Norwegian staff in the world body. Solheim indicates that unless the money is used according to Norwegian standards and values, Norway may cut its allocations to "underperforming" UN agencies. (NRK and the Norway Post 5 October 2006, <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/innenriks/1.1079963>

<http://www.norwaypost.no/cgi-bin/norwaypost/imaker?id=28917>)

Sweden

New asylum law allowed more than half to stay

The Swedish Migration Board has completed the review of asylum applications admitted for the duration of the temporary asylum law. Some 30 000 applications were filed, with over 18 000 asylum seekers being granted a permit of stay. The temporary law was in force from November 15th to March 31st and allowed rejected asylum seekers hiding in Sweden in fear of deportation to file a new asylum application. Out of families with children, 76 percent were allowed to stay. Many of those that were denied asylum have now disappeared.

(SR 5 October, <http://www.sr.se/cgi-bin/ekot/artikel.asp?Artikel=959889>)

Applicants feel let down by temporary asylum law

Despite the fact that six out of ten asylum-seekers got a residence permit under the temporary asylum law, many feel let down by the new law. According to Madeleine

Seidlitz, a lawyer at Amnesty, the need for protection was not taken into consideration when decisions were made. Residence permits were given automatically to families with children and persons from dangerous countries of origin. However, some adults having lived in Sweden for a long time and being in need of protection have not had their cases tried fairly, argues Seidlitz.

(SR 5 October 2006 <http://www.sr.se/Ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=960444>)

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Friday 6 October 2006

Estonia

Estonia grants citizenship to 83 people

The Estonian government yesterday decided to grant citizenship to 83 people who have met the necessary conditions. The action plan of Estonia's national integration program for 2004-2007, sets out a goal to grant Estonian citizenship to at least 5,000 people annually. In all, over 140,000 people have become naturalized citizens since Estonia regained independence in 1991. In August 2006, 10 percent of the population in Estonia had an undetermined citizenship.

(Baltic News Service 6 October 2006)

Latvia

Polls show even ratings ahead of elections

The latest opinion polls in Latvia show no convincing lead for any party running up to the general elections on Saturday, 7 October. The ruling People's Party was slightly ahead in the polls with a support of 13,7 percent. Another ruling coalition party, the Greens and the Farmers' Union, is in second place with 12.4 percent whereas the opposition party, New Era, ranks third with 9,5 percent of votes. Ratings went down for the nationalist party For Fatherland and Freedom which according to the poll would barely cross the statutory 5 percent threshold. (Baltic News Service 6 October 2006)

Latvia urged to improve ethnic minority rights

The Council of Europe urges Latvia to take measures to improve the protection of ethnic minorities. Though Latvia had made progress in protection of minority rights, the situation could, according to the Council, be better. Latvia is especially encouraged to deal with the large number of non-citizens. The Latvian Parliament ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in May, with two reservations as to minority languages. One reservation will partly prohibit use of any other language on street signs, and the other bans official use of any other language but Latvian in local governments. (Baltic News Service 6 October 2006)

Norway

Demands for more results from the UN

As the Norwegian government presents plans to increase Norway's donations to development and humanitarian projects, voices are raised for more value for the money spent. Minister of Development Erik Solheim (Socialist Left Party) emphasizes the need for Norway to increase its demands particularly on the three largest recipients of Norwegian aid, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF. "If we fail to set demands, we will let the

UN be developed according to the views of other countries, which might be contradictory to ours,” says Solheim. Norway is one of the largest donors to the UN and Solheim wants Norway to use this influence for making the system more effective. He calls for reforms and if these do not take place; he says the UN will have to look for funding elsewhere.

(Dagbladet 5 October 2006 <http://www.dagbladet.no/nyheter/2006/10/05/478807.html>)

Norwegian government will take more refugees

The Norwegian government wants to receive more refugees and intends to lift the number of quota refugees from 1000 to 1200 next year. The current government aims to increase the quota to 1500. After this only the United States, Canada, Australia and Sweden would receive more quota refugees than Norway. Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion Bjarne Håkon Hanssen (Labour Party) emphasizes the importance of ensuring that the quota is used for individual refugees in need of protection.

(Aftenposten 6 October 2006

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/politikk/statsbudsjettet/article1485411.ece>)

Quotas may be introduced for immigrants

The Norwegian government is looking into the possibility of introducing quotas in order to get more immigrants working in state administration. The measure is questioned, but the government feels it needs to step in, as the unemployment rate amongst immigrants is 7,3 percent, being three times higher than amongst the rest of the population. The proposition will be included in the government's action plan for integration, due to be presented on Friday.

(NRK 6 October 2006 <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/innenriks/1.1084590>)

Language courses at the core of the integration package

In its national budget for 2007, presented on Friday, the Norwegian government proposes some **400 million NOK (USD????)** to be used to get more immigrants into the labour market. The action plan for integration and inclusion of immigrants, presented by Minister of Labour and Social Integration, Bjarne Håkon Hanssen, consists of 28 measures aiming to ease the integration of immigrants in the Norwegian society. Language courses for immigrants and asylum seekers are given special emphasis, particularly when it concerns children in daycare. (Dagsavisen 6 October 2006 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2335423.ece>)

Sweden

New government in place

Sweden's new prime minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt (The Moderate Party), struck a conciliatory tone when he presented the plans for his government to the Riksdag on Friday morning, promising to listen to "everyone in Sweden." According to Reinfeldt, Swedish integration policy has failed to meet its targets as social and economical divisions in society continue to grow. The new government will concentrate in overcoming obstacles and creating new possibilities, and looking into the connection between language skills and citizenship. Reinfeldt feels no separate policy is needed for immigrants after the primary stages; integration is best improved and carried out through work and language skills. "We want to see immigrants as individuals, we want to improve integration and fight discrimination", Reinfeldt said. To deal with the

segregation on the housing market, the government wants to make it easier to build new apartments in metropolitan areas.

Ministers in the new government:

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Carl Bildt (The Moderate Party)

Minister of Justice: Beatrice Ask (The Moderate Party)

Minister of Social Affairs: Göran Hågglund (The Christian Democrats)

Minister of Integration and Equality: Nyamko Sabuni (Liberal Party)

Minister of Migration: Tobias Billström (The Moderate Party)

Minister of Employment: Sven Otto Littorin (The Moderate Party)

Minister of International Development Cooperation: Gunilla Carlsson (The Moderate Party)

(SR, Aftonbladet and the Local 6 October 2006

<http://www.sr.se/Stockholm/nyheter/artikel.asp?artikel=961572>

Appointment of Minister of Integration criticized

Author and debater Kurdo Baksi criticizes the appointment of Nyamko Sabuni as new Minister of Integration and Equality. Baksi feels very disappointed that the government would choose a person he experiences as negative towards Islam, to manage integration issues. According to Baksi, the new Minister will be the most incompetent Minister of Integration ever, as she lacks both empathy and experience. "Appointing incompetent immigrants creates symbolic politics, not action politics", Baksi says. (DN 6 October 2006

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=1042&a=578305&previousRenderType=6>)

Sabuni criticized for spreading prejudice

The appointment of Nyamko Sabuni as Minister of Integration and Equality is criticized also within the Liberal Party. Liberal Party member Mikael Trolin states that Sabuni has turned against immigrants and emphasizes the prejudices already existing in society. He feels Sabuni has no contact with the people she is to represent as Minister of Integration. Christian Democrat Juan Fonseca sees the appointment as a start of an assimilation policy in Sweden, a policy that is directed towards the majority population instead of improving the situation for immigrants. Last summer Sabuni made a much criticized proposal for compulsory gynecological examinations for all school girls in order to identify cases of genital mutilation. Sabuni has also proposed an age limit for wearing a veil. (SR 6 October 2006 <http://www.sr.se/Ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=961983>)

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Saturday 7- Monday 9 October 2006

Denmark

Sixty-six citizens file racism charges against eight politicians

A group of 66 citizens has formally reported eight leading politicians from right-wing Danish People's Party (DF) to the police for breaching Denmark's racism laws. The citizens' group, led by Rune Engelbreth Larsen, former chairman of the Minority Party, filed its charges in an open statement published in Politiken, quoting manifestly anti-Moslem remarks, deliberate use of 'hate speech' and racist utterances by prominent DF politicians; including party leader Pia Kjærsgaard. (Danish Press Review 9 October 2006)

Growing number of suicide attempts in asylum centres

Asylum seekers in centers run by the Red Cross are becoming more and more desperate. During the first half of the year, 25 asylum seekers being taken care of by the Red Cross attempted suicide; while the figure for the whole of last year was 24. Altogether, 32 asylum seekers have so far attempted to take their own lives this year. (DR 7 October 2006, <http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/10/06/231849.htm>)

Denmark renders girl stateless

Parents of an eight-year-old girl are facing a tough struggle with the Danish Ministry of Integration. The girl has a Danish father and has grown up in Denmark. Her mother is Russian and until 1999 children were given nationality according to their mother. The girl was never registered as Russian in Denmark and as Russia denies her citizenship, the girl is officially stateless. Niels Erik Hansen, a lawyer at the Danish Center of Documentation and Advice on Racial Discrimination, finds the case to be appalling and in direct violation of the UN Children's Convention. There are several similar cases in Denmark. (DR 8 October 2006, <http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/10/08/190358.htm>)

Danish immigration policy scares Norwegian politicians

Denmark has one of the strictest policies on family reunification in Europe. Norwegian Minister of Integration and Social Inclusion Bjarne Haakon Hanssen, has looked into the Danish policy with the intention of creating similar rules for Norway. The proposed new law has been both criticized and praised in Norway, with national daily Dagbladet publishing an introduction to the differences and similarities of the Danish and

Norwegian refugee and asylum policies. (Dagbladet 9 October 2006
<http://www.dagbladet.no/magasinet/2006/10/05/478845.html>)

Finland

Dessalegne: EU leaders too inefficient

Damtew Dessalegne, Regional Representative for UNHCR's office in Rome, criticized EU leaders for inefficiency in their immigration policy. Dessalegne spoke at a seminar, arranged by the Finnish Refugee Council, on the growing number of illegal immigrants arriving in Europe by boat. According to Dessalegne the EU has acted incredibly passively in the matter. Dessalegne also turned down the idea of a list of safe countries where people can be returned. "Such a list is not relevant in refugee policy, every case has to be looked into individually", Dessalegne said. (HS 6 October 2006,
<http://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/artikkeli/YKn+pakolaisj%C3%A4rjest%C3%B6n+edustaja+arvosteli+EU-ministereit%C3%A4/1135222131067>)

Iceland

Vietnamese man to be deported

The Reykjavík District Court has confirmed a deportation order for a young Vietnamese man. The man came to Iceland with his mother at the age of 16 in 2001, and had a resident permit until 2004. The man has been sentenced by a court of law on four separate occasions since 2002: once for sexually molesting a child and three times for assault. The deportation is based on a paragraph in the Immigrants' Act in which a foreigner may be deported if he or she has been sentenced or detained for actions that warrant imprisonment for three months or longer. (Iceland Review 6 October 2006,
http://www.icelandreview.com/icelandreview/daily_news/?cat_id=16539&ew_0_a_id=235529)

Latvia

Latvian coalition parties nominate present PM to head new government

Latvia's ruling coalition partners have nominated present Prime Minister Aigars Kalvitis to head the country's new government after Saturday's general elections. The ruling conservative People's Party emerged as the winner in Latvia's general elections with 19.49 percent of the votes. Coalition partners, the Greens and Farmers' Union remained second with 16.69 percent of the votes, and the opposition center-right New Time party ranked third with 16.38 percent, according to preliminary results. In all, seven political parties have won places in Latvia's 100-seat parliament, including the left-wing Harmony Center (14.42 pct), Latvia's First Party and Latvia's Way alliance

(8.59 pct), the nationalist For Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK (6.95 pct), as well as the leftist For Human Rights In United Latvia (6.02 pct). 62.28 per cent of Latvia's eligible voters cast their votes on Saturday.
(Baltic News Service 9 October 2006)

Norway

UNHCR post for Norwegian diplomat

Norwegian Ambassador Wegger C. Strommen has been elected Vice Chairman of UNHCR's Executive Committee. "We are pleased by the appointment of Ambassador Wegger C. Strommen to this central position. This is recognition of Ambassador Strommen and Norway's broad and active humanitarian engagement," says Undersecretary of State Raymond Johansen. (Norway Post 8 October 2006, <http://www.norwaypost.no/cgi-bin/norwaypost/imaker?id=29080>)

Sweden

New Minister of Integration prioritize language skills and jobs

The newly appointed Minister for Integration and Gender Equality, Nyamko Sabuni, says the most important integration issue is language. "More people, both adults and children, must have improved opportunities to learn Swedish. It's the best way to get more people into the labour market," Sabuni says. "In terms of refugee and integration policy, Sweden will protect the right to asylum and continue to offer a safe haven for those fleeing persecution. On equality, the new government will also prioritize tackling honor-related violence and will develop an action plan for tackling violence against women." (Swedish Press Review and SVT 6 October 2006, http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=22620&a=674944&lid=aldreNyheter_275209&lpos=rubrik_674944)

Minister of migration: Refugee policy must be individual

According to Thomas Billström, new Minister of Migration, Swedish refugee and asylum policy must be based on individual merits. Billström opposed the temporary asylum law, which was in force last autumn and allowed refugees hiding in Sweden to re-apply for asylum. "As soon as decisions are made on a collective instead of on individual basis, problems start to occur," the new minister said. Billström finds the setup of a new migration court to be an important step forward and he wants to focus on shortening the asylum application process. The minister also wants to use economical incitements to persuade municipalities to receive more refugees and feels the EU needs to work towards a better-functioning asylum and refugee policy.
(Dagens Nyheter 6 October 2006, <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=578357>)

300 companies to be taken off UN Global Compact list

Over 300 companies are to be taken off UN's Global Compact list. Global Compact is a cooperative project between the UN and companies all over the world. The companies agree to follow the ten Global Compact commandments, including environmental protection and the fight against child labor and corruption. The companies have to submit an annual report and the companies that fail to do so are dropped from the list. 3,500 companies in 100 countries are part of the project. (SR 9 October 2006 <http://www.sr.se/Ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=963366>)

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Tuesday 10 October 2006

Norway

Police frighten Afghani refugees

The Norwegian police is criticized for scaring Afghani refugees to death while searching for persons to be deported back to Afghanistan. One asylum seeker jumped out of the building, fell three floors and broke both his legs when police came to pick him up. According to Zahir Athani, spokesperson for the Afghans to be deported, who were hunger striking earlier this year, the police behave aggressively and push asylum seekers to dramatic solutions. The police confirm that their aim is to deport as many of the illegally residing Afghans as possible. Over 40 Afghans have been deported since the hunger strike ended in June. The Norwegian government said it would only return people to areas confirmed to be safe by UNHCR. Some 700 have been denied asylum and are to be deported.

(Dagbladet and Dagsavisen 10 October 2006,
<http://www.dagbladet.no/nyheter/2006/10/10/479252.html>
<http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2340113.ece>)

Sweden

Refugees shot dead Gothenburg

Two men died after a shooting in an apartment in Gothenburg on Monday night. The police believe the victims are Asian refugees. The shooting happened in the Hammarkullen area of the city at around 2am on Tuesday. One of the men died at the scene, the other died later in hospital. Two people are reported to have left the apartment shortly after shooting the men.

(SR 10 October 2006 <http://www.sr.se/Ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=965832>
<http://www.thelocal.se/article.php?ID=5163&date=20061010>)

Medical clinic for refugees set up in Malmö

A health clinic aimed helping only asylum seekers and refugees opened in Malmö on Tuesday. The clinic was started as refugees and asylum seekers often find it difficult to get treatment, being constantly moved around between reception centers. Lack of a permanent clinic may result in important information being lost or spread among various clinics. The intention is also to provide asylum seekers medical treatment and advice in their native languages.

(SR 10 October 2006 <http://www.sr.se/cgiin/malmo/nyheter/artikel.asp?Artikel=965588>)

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Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Wednesday 18 October 2006

Denmark

Deported murderer back in Denmark

A Palestinian man who was deported from Denmark after serving a 12-year jail sentence for the brutal murder of ex top boxer Racheed Lawal has reportedly returned to this country. Police have instigated a nationwide search for the now 31-year-old Abou-Chaker who, according to the police, possibly arrived on an evacuation flight from Lebanon, via Cyprus, on the 22nd of June. According to TV2 News, the deported murderer has been hiding out with his family in the immigrant-dominated housing project Vollsmose in Odense but has now gone underground.

dr news

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Wednesday 18 October 2006

Denmark

Orphan boy to be deported to Sri Lanka

A 15-year-old boy from Sri Lanka is being sent back from Denmark today. The Danish Immigration service has denied the boy asylum as citizens of Sri Lanka are not considered in need of asylum in Denmark. The boy's family died in the tsunami and he has been living with his aunt in Denmark since then. His only family member in Sri Lanka is a 17-year-old brother, who is involved in the Tamil Tigers. Lawyer Hannah Krogh feels that UNHCR meeting the boy at the airport in Sri Lanka is not enough of a network for a child to go back to.

(DR 18 October 2006 <http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/10/18/060846.htm>)

Norway

Afghani refugee goes on hunger strike in Norway

Two weeks ago an Afghani refugee, Ahmad Ali Hassani jumped out of a window to flee police that came to deport him. He broke both his legs and is currently in hospital. He has now gone on hunger strike and has not eaten for 13 days. At present Norway deports only asylum seekers from Kabul, and as Hassani is from the Ghanzi province he does not risk immediate deportation but feels terrified for the risk of being sent back. Hassani says he will not start eating until he is convinced he is safe. In summer some 100 Afghani refugees went on hunger strike to protest against the deportations back to Afghanistan.

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article1499382.ece>

Minister Hanssen pleased about visit to Geneva

Norwegian Minister for Labour and Social Inclusion, Bjarne Håkon Hanssen, met on Monday with UNHCR High Commissioner António Guterres in Geneva to discuss Norwegian asylum policy. Minister Hanssen was very pleased about his visit to Geneva and underlined that Norway handles asylum issues very well. "There is hardly any other country granting asylum to as many Somali refugees", the Minister said. By the end of the year the Norwegian government will present its plan on how it will take the Soria-Moria declaration, urging the government to follow UNHCR guidelines, into consideration. According to Minister Hanssen changes will be made in three areas; refugee status determination, human trafficking and gender based violence. Changes will not affect the deportations of Somalis and Afghani. Minister Hanssen admitted that the Norwegian policy on deportations to South Somalia is in conflict with UNHCR recommendations, but pointed out that all deportations are based on individual evaluations. (Aftenposten 18 October 2006,

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article1499201.ece>)

Celebrities call for changes in immigration policy

Several celebrities have set up a petition to urge the Norwegian government to change its immigration policy towards a more humane approach. The aim of the campaign is to push for changes in the new aliens act due early next year. Some celebrities are threatening to give up their Norwegian citizenship unless changes to the asylum and immigration policy are made.

Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion, Bjarne Håkon Hanssen is, however, very satisfied with the way the government handles immigration issues. The Minister feels confident that refugees and asylum seekers are treated well in Norway. (Dagsavisen 18 October 2006, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2355340.ece>)

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Thursday 19 October 2006

Denmark

UNICEF shocked over deportation

After having been denied asylum in Denmark 15-year-old Rams is due to be deported back to Sri Lanka, where he has only a brother, fighting with the Tamil Tigers, awaiting him. UNICEF is shocked by the decision and does not understand how Denmark can send a young boy back to a country in chaos. Minister of Integration, Rikke Hvilshøj, said yesterday that the Danish authorities will take a second look at the case, but should nothing new come up the decision to send Rams back stands. (DR Nyheder, 19 October, <http://www.dr.dk/nyheder/>

<http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/10/19/113944.htm>)

Ram's case re-opened

The attorneys representing the 15-year-old Sri Lankan boy, Rams, who is to be deported from Denmark unless no new information concerning his application for asylum comes up, sent today in a new application to the Danish immigration authority. This after Minister of Integration, Rikke Hvilshøj, promised that the authority will consider the case once more.

(Jyllands-Posten & Politiken, 19 October, 2006,
<http://www.jp.dk/indland/artikel:aid=4028506/>
<http://politiken.dk/indland/article187827.ece>)

Norway

Riding on money, oil and asylum seekers

According to Fredrik Carlsen, a researcher at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, the success of the Progress Party (Frp) is strictly linked to increased oil prices, asylum seekers, and interest rates. Carlsen estimates that additional 1000 asylum seekers would mean an increase of 2-3 percent in the support for Frp in the long run.

(Aftenposten, 19 October, 2006,
<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/politikk/article1499510.ece>)

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Friday 20 October 2006

Denmark

Immigration Service to reopen Sri Lankan boy expulsion case

Minister for Refugees, Immigration and Integration Rikke Hvilshøj (V) has announced that the Immigration Service will have another look at the case of the 15-year-old Sri Lankan boy, Rams, who was ordered to be expelled from Denmark. That would make Rams the first minor to be ordered out of Denmark, despite the Immigration Law forbids the forcible repatriation of unaccompanied children to war-torn countries in which they have no proper family network. Rams lost his mother and two of his three brothers and sisters in the tsunami in December 2004, after which his father committed suicide. He still has an older brother in Sri Lanka, who is fighting with the Tamil Tigers - an organization on EU's list of banned terrorist groups – but the two brothers are said not to have any contact with each other.

(Ritzau, translation by News Express, 20 October)

The Police still want to arrest Sri Lankan boy

Despite Danish Immigration Service's promise to have a second look at case of 15 year old Rams from Sri Lanka, the police still intend to arrest him. This was announced Friday morning and it was emphasized that it is not a counter-order. (Jyllands-Posten, Berlingske, Politiken, 20 October <http://www.jp.dk/indland/artikel:aid=4030794/>, <http://www.berlingske.dk/indland/artikel:aid=810540/>, <http://politiken.dk/indland/article188376.ece>)

Sweden

Strong anti-immigrant sentiment

A survey carried out by Gallup on behalf of the news magazine Fokus, reveals that many Swedes share the opinions expressed by the xenophobic party, the Swedish Democrats. For example, 40 percent believe that there should be more rigorous requirements on applicants to provide proof of identity when applying for asylum, and 31 percent believe that Sweden has taken in far too many immigrants in too short a period of time.

(Dagens Nyheter, translation by Swedish Press Review, 20 October)

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Saturday 21 October – Monday 23 October 2006

Denmark

Pregnant asylum seeker imprisoned

A pregnant Kosovo-Albanian woman, who has yet not received an answer from the Danish Immigration Service, but is most likely to be deported, has been put into custody. This to prevent the woman from disappearing once a decision has been reached. Pregnant women who are less than eight weeks away from delivering are, however, according to police guidelines not to be deported.
(Jyllands-Posten, 23 October, 2006, <http://www.jp.dk/indland/artikel:aid=4034948/>)

Sweden

Swedish daily interviews new Minister of Migration

Saturday's issue of Dagens Nyheter interviews Minister of Migration, Tobias Billström. Billström, who was one of the opponents of the temporary asylum law (which focused on asylum seekers whose deportation orders had not been carried out, and meant that almost eighteen thousand people were granted permanent residency in Sweden) believes the law has made refugees think that Sweden has a more generous asylum policy than the country actually does. Instead Billström wants Sweden to be perceived internationally as having a solidaric refugee policy, nonetheless no different from the rest of the European Union. During his time in office, Billström intends to guarantee asylum seekers a fair asylum process, maintain the regulated migration and work for an active labor immigration policy. He also hopes that the Swedish Migration Board will reach the target of a turnaround time for the processing of applications of maximum three months.
(Dagens Nyheter, 21 October, 2006, <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=554&a=582398&previousRenderType=1>)

Few municipalities are willing to receive refugee children

The Swedish migration board urges municipalities to accommodate the unaccompanied children seeking asylum in Sweden. At the moment 106 children are waiting to be accommodated around the country. Since 1 July municipalities are responsible themselves for the reception of unaccompanied minors.
(Dagens Nyheter, 23 October, <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=147&a=582707&previousRenderType=1>)

Not enough time to help unaccompanied children

Britta Lundström, the director of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), says today that the municipalities were not given enough time to find accommodation and make decisions regarding the unaccompanied children seeking asylum. According to an agreement between the municipalities and the Migration Board,

the responsibility for this group of asylum seekers would after 1 July this year be handed over to the municipalities. The number of children coming alone to Sweden has since this summer increased from an average of 30 each month to around 100.
(Svenska Dagbladet, 23 October, 2006,
http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/inrikes/did_13915263.asp)

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Tuesday 24 October to Wednesday 25 October 2006

Sweden

Refugee children living with criminals

Unaccompanied refugee children, seeking asylum in Sweden, are being put in same institutions as juvenile criminals. This is the case in the municipality of Mölndal, one of the four temporary reception municipalities for unaccompanied refugee children. The intention is that children would stay in the temporary accommodation for up to a week, but according to a Swedish daily, Dagens Nyheter, some have stayed up to two months before being offered a permanent residence.

(Dagens Nyheter, translation by Swedish Press Release, 24 October)

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Thursday 26 October 2006

Denmark

Conservatives call for stop to 'inhuman' deportations

Leading members of the Conservative Party have characterised immigration and residency policies as 'too harsh' and are demanding a meeting with Minister Immigration Rikke Hvilshøj (V) to discuss recent cases in which immigrants have, they claim, been unfairly deported. The Conservatives stress that they don't want to change current legislation, but they believe that it's being implemented far too rigorously. Minister Hvilshøj said yesterday that she is willing to meet with representatives of the Conservative Party but denied the claims for unfair administration by the authorities. The Conservatives are particularly concerned about the fate of a 15-year-old Sri Lankan boy who is awaiting deportation. (Berlingske and Jyllandsposten, News Express translation, 26 October, <http://www.berlingske.dk/indland/artikel:aid=813432/> <http://www.jp.dk/indland/artikel:aid=4042032/>)

Finland

Growing number of Iraqis flee to Syria

According to UNHCR over two thousand refugees arrive in Syria every day. About 1,6 million have left Iraq mainly to Syria and Jordan, most of them after the US invasion in 2003. UNHCR believes there are some 500,000 Iraqis in Syria. The border between Iraq and Syria is open and Syria remains the only country not requiring a visa from persons traveling from other Arab countries. "Syria hasn't signed the 1951 Convention but it respects it and doesn't send people back", says Mouna Kurdy, coordinator for UNHCR refugee work. Due to a shortage in funding, UNHCR is able to help only a very limited number of refugees. (Helsingin Sanomat 25 October, <http://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/artikkeli/Irakin+pakolaisvirta+Syyriaan+kasvaa/1135222568380>)

Thousands of Iraqis arrive in Sweden

The number of Iraqis applying for asylum in the EU is on the rise. Out of the total of over 7,000 asylum-seekers arriving to Europe during the first half of the year, over a half have applied for asylum in Sweden. This is, according to Krister Isaksson at the Swedish Migration Board, due to Sweden's large existing Iraqi population. Isaksson also states that many Iraqis are familiar with Sweden's policy to grant residency permits to Iraqis. (Helsingin Sanomat 25 October, <http://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/artikkeli/Tuhannet+irakilaiset+hakeutuvat+Ruotsiin/1135222568406>)

Few Iraqi refugees arrive in Finland

So far 170 Iraqi asylum-seekers have arrived in Finland this year, a slightly smaller number than at the same time last year. The Finnish Directorate of Immigration has made an asylum decision in 143 cases and 87 applicants were granted asylum. The reason for granting a permit to stay was, in most cases, that police was unable to handle the deportations back to Iraq. According to the Ministry of the Interior, the situation in Iraq is not serious enough to be a grounds for granting asylum. (Helsingin Sanomat 25 October,

<http://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/artikkeli/Suomeen+yh%C3%A4+v%C3%A4h%C3%A4n+tulijoita/1135222568424>)

Increase in racially motivated crimes

The number of racially motivated crimes increased sharply in Finland last year, according to police statistics. A total of 669 crimes were reported which is about 100 cases more than in the previous year. Assault is the most common racially motivated crime, accounting for almost half of all cases. Other crimes include defamation, illegal threat and malicious damage. A racially motivated crime usually occurs in a public open place during the evening or at night. Half of the victims of racially motivated crimes are Finnish citizens followed by Somalis, Russians and Turks. (YLE 23 October,

<http://www.yle.fi/news/id45713.html>

Sweden

Millions flee Iraq

As the situation in Iraq becomes increasingly violent, millions flee the country. The number of Iraqis applying for asylum has grown dramatically and some 30 Iraqi refugees arrive in Sweden every day. According to UNHCR reports, one and a half million Iraqis live outside their country and an even larger number of refugees are still within Iraq. (SR 26 October, <http://www.sr.se/Ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=996305>)

Concern about false Iraqi passports

The Swedish authorities are concerned about the possibility of false Iraqi passports being used in Sweden. Unlike some other countries, Sweden accepts the so-called s-passports which are claimed to be easy to fake. Sweden is also the only country attaching the residency permit to the passport. "To question the Iraqi authorities is politically sensitive. However, we feel that it is relevant to point out the deficiencies," says Fred Forsberg at the Migration Board. Anna Leer at UNHCR's regional office for the Baltic and Nordic countries says there is nothing strange about the big number of Iraqis coming to Sweden where many Iraqis already live. The large number of asylum-seekers being a result of easily faked passports is pure speculation. "The conflict in Iraq is costing hundreds of human lives every day and driving thousands from their homes," Leer says.

(SVT, SR and Dagens Nyheter 26 October 2006, translation by Swedish Press Review http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=22620&a=687868&lid=senasteNytt_275214&lpos=rubrik_687868 <http://www.sr.se/Ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=999628>)

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Friday 27 October 2006

Denmark

PM's wife criticizes asylum policies

As the two government coalition parties continue their internal dispute about the authorities' strict interpretation of immigration legislation, Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen's (V) wife Anne-Mette Fogh has commented on the poor conditions for children of asylum seekers in Denmark. In a new book, 'First Lady', Ms Rasmussen, a qualified kindergarten teacher, characterizes the total lack of activities for children in asylum centres as 'madness'. Mr Rasmussen said yesterday that he hasn't read the book or discussed the subject with his wife but added that in light of recent criticism, the Ministry of Immigration was now improving conditions at asylum centres. (Berlinske Tidende, translation by News Express, 27 October)

Norway

Concerns on increased immigration of labour

Despite the fact that highly qualified immigrants are unemployed in Norway, the Norwegian government wishes to increase the number of labor immigrants. Ellen Stensrud, first secretary of the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), says that it is a morally difficult question to open the Norwegian borders to this new workforce while keeping refugees and asylum seekers out of the labour market. (Aftenposten, 27 October, 2006, <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article1510438.ece>)

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Saturday 28 -Monday 30 October 2006

Denmark

UNHCR urges Denmark not to deport 15-year-old

UNHCR has urged Denmark not to deport a 15 year-old boy from Sri Lanka. In a letter to the Ministry of Integration, UNHCR writes that '...no Tamils, especially those from the north or east, should be forced to return home before there is a drastic improvement in the security situation in Sri Lanka.' The 15-year-old boy lost both his mother and two sisters in the Tsunami in 2004 and was eventually sent to Denmark to live with relatives. His application for asylum has been rejected twice, even though his father in Sri Lanka committed suicide last year and his one remaining brother has joined the Tamil Tigers, named by the EU as a terrorist organisation. The Danish People's Party dismissed the UN intervention and said it should keep its nose out of Danish domestic affairs. Also the Danish Minister of integration, Rikke Hvilshøj, says it is up to the Danish Refugee Board to rule in the case, and that UNHCR should not get involved.

(DR, Jyllandsposten and Politiken 28-30 October, translation by News Express

<http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/10/28/155136.htm>

<http://politiken.dk/indland/article192404.ece>

<http://politiken.dk/indland/article191927.ece>

<http://www.jp.dk/indland/artikel:aid=4046978/>)

Immigration legislation here to stay: minister

The government's strict immigration legislation isn't open to interpretation or reassessment and cannot be modified or relaxed – that was the message from Minister of Refugees, Immigrants and Integration Rikke Hvilshøj, Friday, as she rejected appeals from the Conservatives for the government's strict immigration legislation to be eased. After a meeting with leading Conservatives, Ms Hvilshøj said: 'This isn't a 'rubber band' law that can be stretched and pulled according to each individual case. We have to abide by the legal framework within the legislation.

(DR Translation by News Express 28 October 2006

<http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/10/28/155136.htm>

Mrs. Fogh was not trying to be political

Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen's wife Anne-Mette says she had no idea that her criticism of the poor conditions for children of asylum seekers would be interpreted in a political manner. In a new book, 'First Ladies,' Ms Rasmussen, a kindergarten teacher, characterizes the conditions for children at the country's refugee centres as 'total madness,' an opinion that has created a political storm for her husband. Despite a later attempt to tone down the comments, political commentator Henrik Qvortrup, a former 'spin doctor' for the Prime Minister, called

Ms Fogh Rasmussen 'naïve' in believing she could offer an opinion like this without thinking it would be interpreted as a criticism of the government's policies
(Translation from News Express 28 October 2006)

Sweden

Asylum most likely to be granted in Skåne

Asylum seekers appealing negative decisions made by the Swedish Migration Board are most likely to receive an overturned negative decision if their appeal is handled by the Migration Court in the southern province of Skåne. The new Migration Courts are interpreting the law very differently. In Skåne the Migration Court overturns rejections in almost a third of the appeal cases, in Gothenburg decisions are changed in every fourth case whereas in Stockholm it is only one case out of ten. The Swedish Bar Association has contacted the Minister of Migration to point out the large differences between the Migration Courts and also the fact that procedures vary between them. The Swedish Network of Asylum and Refugee Support Groups (FARR) is also very critical to how sensitive information is being handled in the courts.

(SR and DN 29 October 2006 <http://www.sr.se/cgi-bin/malmo/nyheter/artikel.asp?Artikel=1006763>
<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=584348>)

“Manipulation behind refugee child’s apathy”

During the past few years, more than 400 refugee children have developed symptoms of apathy and nobody has yet been able to fully explain the symptoms or the reasons behind them. According to Tomas Eriksson, doctor and specialist in general psychiatry, a lot of effort is being put in to fight the explanation that apathy among refugee children is a result of manipulation, as this type of explanation would be perceived as racist. Despite the reasons behind the condition, it is a very serious illness and Mr Eriksson demands more research into the causes of apathy. He also demands that those responsible for treating these children examine the possibility that they may suffer from pharmaceutical poisoning. Mr Eriksson gives an example of an apathetic refugee girl that showed clear symptoms of pharmaceutical poisoning. It turned out that every time the girl woke up, her mother gave her medication against schizophrenia and depression. A day after her medication was stopped, she was symptom-free.

(DN 30 October 2006 Translation by Swedish Press Review
<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=584287>)

Refugees fleeing en masse to Syria

The fighting in Iraq over the past year has led to thousands of refugees fleeing the country; Syria is receiving some 2,000 Iraqis every day. UNHCR is reporting that at least 40,000 new Iraqi refugees arrive in Syria every month. It is mainly the middle class that flees to Syria, wealthy Iraqis go to Jordan and the poorest are left in Iraq, where one and a half million people are internally displaced.

(SR 30 October 2006 <http://www.sr.se/Ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=1007295>)

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Tuesday 31 October 2006

Denmark

Kjærsgaard: Cowardly Conservatives'

Danish People's Party (DF) leader Pia Kjærsgaard has once again lashed out at the Conservative Party. The Conservatives last week termed a number of decisions made by the Refugee Board as 'inhumane' and criticised the authorities' strict adherence to immigration legislation. Ms Kjærsgaard called the criticism 'cowardly' and said a party in government should have more sense and think more long term.

(Translation by News Express 31 October 2006)

15-year-old deportee gets reprieve

The 15-year-old Sri Lankan boy who has been given a deportation order will now be allowed to stay in Denmark. The boy's case has caused a public outcry and the UN joined in by warning the Ministry of Immigration not to send refugees and asylum seekers back to Sri Lanka. Minister of Refugees, Immigrants and Immigration Rikke Hvilshøj said that in light of the UN's concern, the Refugee Board has now put the case on hold. The boy's lawyer greeted the news and demanded that he should be given permanent residency as he would be in extreme danger if sent home.

(JP and Berlingske 31 October 2006 Translation by News Express

<http://www.jp.dk/indland/artikel:aid=4050818/>

<http://www.berlingske.dk/indland/artikel:aid=816106/>)

Latvia

Latvian authorities close illegal immigration channel

The Latvian authorities last week closed an illegal immigration channel at the airport in Riga and detained four persons, including two border guards. The detained border guards are suspected of having abused their positions by accepting bribes and helping people to cross the border illegally.

(Baltic News Service 31 October 2006)

Sweden

Hundreds of unaccompanied refugee children need housing

Hundreds of unaccompanied refugee children are waiting for a permanent place to live in Sweden. At present they are placed in orphanages awaiting a more permanent solution.

Since the beginning of July the municipalities are responsible for the housing of unaccompanied refugee children, but most are unable to receive them. From January to September 450 unaccompanied children applied for asylum in Sweden.

(Stockholm City 31 October 2006

http://www.city.se/ArticlePages/200610/30/20061030201926_City512/20061030201926_City512.dbp.asp)

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