

Summary of the Swedish Government Communication (2005/06:95)

A National Action Plan for Human Rights 2006–2009

Human rights must not be violated. This document presents a summary of the Swedish action plan for human rights. The summary is intended to give an overall picture of the action plan, which is considerably more detailed, with the focus on how the work of producing the action plan was performed.

The National Action Plan for Human Rights 2006–2009 was submitted to the Swedish Parliament, the Riksdag, in March 2006 in the form of a Government Communication (skr. 2005/06:95). The original version of the communication contains an action plan with 135 measures intended to be implemented during the period 2006–2009 (part I) based on a survey of the human rights situation in Sweden in 2005 (part II). These two parts have been shortened and integrated with one another in this summary. However, to illustrate how the original version of the communication is arranged, the full version of two areas, the sections on international undertakings and on national minorities, has been included with excerpts from the survey and action plan also being included in this summary.

The whole communication is available on the Government's website on human rights, www.humanrights.gov.se. This summary in English has also been published there. The summary can also be ordered at www.sweden.gov.se

A general election to the Riksdag took place in Sweden in 2006 and a new government took office. The new government broadly supports the national action plan for human rights and regards this as one of the bases for work in this area during its period of office from 2006 to 2010. There may, however, be minor discrepancies in how particular measures in the action plan are implemented, due, for instance, to changed current or political circumstances.

6 Work designed to change attitudes etc.

6.1 Introduction

According to a number of international conventions and documents, education should strengthen respect for human rights. The evaluation of the first national action plan for human rights includes the recommendation that education on human rights should be prioritised in the Government's second action plan for human rights. The evaluator stresses that education on human rights, both within the education system and for civil servants, is of the highest importance in the task of achieving actual change.

The Government shares the view that education on human rights is of great importance, perhaps the most important tool in the work of promoting human rights in the long term. Increased knowledge and awareness are also, as mentioned at the beginning of this report, central in the work of achieving the Government's long-term objective of full respect for human rights in Sweden.

6.2 Education on human rights within the education system

6.2.1 Education on human rights in school

Clarification of human rights in the Education Act

<p>Measure 115: In a future Government bill on a new Education Act, the Government intends to recommend that the Act should stipulate that education shall promote respect for human rights.</p>

During the last decade the Swedish school system has undergone extensive reform which will conclude with a proposal for a new Education Act. A committee of inquiry was set up in 1999 (ToR 1999:15) with the task of putting forward a proposal for a new Education Act. The inquiry's proposal (SOU 2002:121, *An Education Act for quality and equality*) and a draft for referral to the Council on Legislation have been circulated for comment. The Government intends to present an Education Bill to the Riksdag (Parliament) during the next term of office.

Several other reforms are to be implemented. These include, for example, the Act (2006:67) Prohibiting Discrimination and Other Degrading Treatment of Children and School Students, which comes into force on 1 April 2006 (Government Bill 2005/06:38). The new Act is partially based on EC law and the proposal is in line with the aims of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Government believes that human rights need to be more heavily emphasised both as an area of knowledge and as guidance for work and attitudes within the school world. In its Education Bill the Government therefore intends to propose that it be expressly stipulated that education should promote respect for human rights. The Government also intends

to propose that there should, as in the current school legislation, be a provision that all children shall have equal access to education.

Human rights represent a central part of the task of schools to promote democracy

Measure 116: Human rights represent a central part of the task of schools to promote democracy.

The evaluator of the first action plan has expressed the view that the concept of basic values in the curricula should be replaced by human rights and democracy. The Government does not share this view. The concept of basic values is well established in schools. A number of large-scale measures have been implemented in schools to clarify the task of communicating basic values, e.g. the basic value project of 1999–2000, which aimed to stimulate the work relating to issues of democracy within schools, and the establishment of basic value centres.

The Government does, however, believe that human rights represent a key part of the task of schools in promoting democracy and should be included in the work with basic values.

Clarification of human rights in the school steering documents

Measure 117: In connection with the review of the school steering documents following the introduction of new school legislation, the Government intends to clarify within the curricula that human rights are a central part of the task of schools to promote democracy and that knowledge of human rights shall be communicated within schools.

The value foundation in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the principle that all human beings are equal in dignity and rights. This principle is especially highlighted in the education system's steering documents. The curricula for the pre-school (Lpfö 98), compulsory education, the pre-school class and the after-school recreation centre (Lpo 94), and for the voluntary school forms (Lpf 94), are introduced by a chapter which stipulates that the activities should be based on a democratic foundation and be designed in accordance with basic democratic values. The three curricula, which are based on the Education Act (1985:1100), are introduced by a section on basic values in the organisational forms, commission, tasks and activities. The formulations on basic values in the curricula are founded on basic principles of human rights and democracy.

According to the curricula, all who work within schools should promote respect for each person's intrinsic dignity and respect for our common environment. The school's task is to communicate, shape and establish the core values on which our life in the community is based. These values include the sanctity of human life, the freedom and integrity of the individual, the equal dignity of all human beings, equality between men and women, and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable. All people should be treated equally and with respect. The new Act

(2006:67) Prohibiting Discrimination and Other Degrading Treatment of Children and School Students applies to all pupils irrespective of gender, ethnic origin, religion or other form of faith, sexual orientation and disabilities. Hostility towards foreigners and intolerance should be countered by knowledge, open discussion and active measures.

There are also targets and guidelines for pupils' responsibility and influence in the curricula. The basis for democratic thinking is established as early as pre-school. Pupils should be able to influence developments, take responsibility and participate. Their knowledge-based and social development requires that they take a major responsibility for their own work and the school environment. Headteachers have a special responsibility according to the curricula to ensure that school staff are familiar with the international agreements which Sweden is committed to observe.

It can be seen from compulsory school syllabuses for social studies subjects that Swedish legislation, the basic freedoms and rights, and international agreements on human rights such as the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, should be observed and should form the basis for consideration and reflection in a national and global perspective.

During the work of surveying and drawing up the action plan several representatives from the reference groups have asked for clearer formulations in the education system's curricula with regard to respect for human rights, the right to humanitarian treatment and conflict resolution. The Government shares these views. Today's curricula emphasise the basic values which the school should communicate, and with the new Act (2006:67) Prohibiting Discrimination and Other Degrading Treatment of Children and School Students the grounds for discrimination, together with the need for an equal-treatment plan, will clarify and sharpen the task for schools and the connection between human rights and the school's basic values. This means that the curricula need to be revised in this respect.

Since human rights are a central part of the schools' work to promote democracy, this should be clearly shown in all the school's controlling documents. The Government also intends to clarify in these documents that knowledge of human rights should be communicated within the school.

6.2.2 Education on human rights within higher education

Assignment on human rights within higher education

<p>Measure 118: The Government intends in 2007 to commission the National Agency for Higher Education to examine how human rights are observed in education courses where such knowledge may be considered to be of great importance for future professional activity.</p>

The evaluator of the first national action plan for human rights has recommended that a review be made of the extent to which education on human rights forms part of higher education courses, with special focus

on courses where students in their future professional roles will have considerable influence when it comes to respecting and protecting other people's rights. A number of representatives from the reference groups have also stressed the importance of ensuring that education on human rights forms part of relevant vocational training courses and that this training should be concrete and related to practical situations that may arise in the students' future professional lives.

The National Agency for Higher Education has previously carried out studies of how, for example, child and gender perspectives are observed in different education courses. A comprehensive review of the situation as regards how issues of human rights are addressed in training courses has, however, not been carried out. The Government will therefore commission the National Agency for Higher Education in 2007 to examine how human rights are observed in training courses where students in their future professional roles will have considerable influence over the protection of other people's rights.

Knowledge of human rights within higher education

Measure 119: The Government is considering whether there is any need to introduce requirements of knowledge of human rights in relevant examination descriptions for professional examinations or whether it is possible in some other way to promote knowledge of human rights in higher education.

The evaluator of the first national action plan for human rights has strongly emphasised the importance of prioritising education on human rights in the next action plan for, among others, professional people. It has also been suggested in the evaluation that special provision be made to implement training courses where students may be expected in their future professional roles to have influence in situations where human rights are especially critical. A number of representatives from the reference groups, e.g. the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination, the Ombudsman against Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation, the Children's Ombudsman, the Department of Law at Stockholm University, the Stockholm School of Theology, the Institute for the Study of Human Rights at Göteborg University and various non-governmental organisations, have expressed the view that education on human rights should form part of relevant vocational training courses. The vocational courses considered especially relevant include those for lawyers, doctors, teachers, graduate social workers and psychologists.

The Government's long-term objective is to secure full respect for human rights in Sweden. Representatives of central government, municipalities and county councils are all, within the framework of their professional roles, obliged to respect human rights in relation to the individual. Education on human rights is thus a way of preventing abuses in the long term. The Government intends, as a step in the implementation of this action plan, to further educate employees within central government agencies, municipalities and county councils over issues of human rights. People belonging to professional groups with

special responsibility for rights should, however, have an awareness and understanding of what human rights mean in terms of professional life right from the start. Among other things, it is important for a number of professional groups to have an understanding of issues of discrimination.

A revision is currently being carried out of exam descriptions for professional examinations in the degree ordinance (Higher Education Ordinance 1993:100, appendix 2). In connection with this revision the Government is considering whether there is any need to introduce requirements of knowledge of human rights in relevant examination descriptions for professional examinations or whether it is possible in some other way to promote knowledge of human rights in higher education.

6.3 Expertise development with regard to human rights within public administration and the court system

Introduction

The evaluator of the first national action plan for human rights has, like many representatives of the reference groups, strongly emphasised the importance of knowledge of human rights within the public sector. The Government shares this view. Knowledge of human rights at all levels of the societal organisation represents one of the most important components in the work of ensuring total respect for the rights concerned. The Government also believes – as do the evaluator and many representatives of the reference groups, including a large number of agencies – that it is imperative to ensure that the educational measures employed are systematic and are followed up, and that they are adapted as far as possible to the situation where the knowledge is to be applied.

The Government intends during March 2006 to establish a delegation with the task, among other things, of working with various measures to increase knowledge of human rights in public activity.

The Government also intends, e.g. in the agencies' steering documents, to clarify the agencies' responsibility with respect to human rights and through various measures to increase understanding of human rights within the agencies. This work is described in the section on agency management.

The section on the role of the municipalities and county councils in the promotion of human rights also sets out measures intended to increase knowledge and awareness of human rights within these sectors.

Education on human rights within the Government Offices

<p>Measure 120: The Government intends during the period 2006–2009 to initiate regular training courses on human rights for administrators and managers within the Government Offices.</p>

Government Offices staff are a central target group if clear management of state activity in the area of human rights is to become possible, and to promote an increased and more general awareness of these issues within

different political areas. Several education measures geared towards human rights have been implemented within the Government Offices since the first action plan was drawn up in 2002.

The Government believes it is imperative that these education measures be regularly implemented for staff at different levels of the Government Offices organisation. Most training courses that have been carried out on the basis of the first action plan have been geared towards new administrators. It is now therefore essential to combine these measures with new training courses for managers and experienced administrators.

The training courses will involve both general issues relating to human rights and issues connected to this area, including such subjects as gender equality, non-discrimination, the rights of the child, the rights of people with disabilities and the rights of national minorities.

The court system

Measure 121: Since 2002, the National Courts Administration has been regularly instructed in the appropriation directions to record how provisions and intentions in the UN conventions on human rights and the European Convention on Human Rights have been observed in the education operation. The National Courts Administration is one of the agencies which has special importance in the promotion of human rights and it will therefore be covered by the agency management with regard to issues relating to human rights.

The courts have a central role in the promotion of human rights. As a self-sufficient, independent power in relation to public administration, they represent the ultimate opportunity for the individual to demand his or her rights. Judges are trained in Swedish law, including the European Convention on Human Rights, but they should also have sufficient knowledge of Sweden's international obligations to interpret Swedish law in accordance with those obligations.

A number of representatives from the reference groups have expressed the view that knowledge of human rights needs to be strengthened within the legal system. The National Courts Administration has on its own initiative carried out a study to determine what judges feel needs to be included in training in EC law and European Convention law. A substantial proportion of the judges who answered the questionnaire stated that they need further training of this kind.

Since 2002, the National Courts Administration has been regularly instructed in its appropriation directions to record how provisions and intentions in the UN conventions on human rights and the European Convention on Human Rights have been observed in the education operation. In the appropriation directions for 2004, 2005 and 2006, the National Courts Administration was also instructed to record measures taken to increase knowledge of crimes of human trafficking for sexual purposes and to produce a description and analysis of measures carried out in accordance with the strategy for competence development in discrimination issues which the National Courts Administration previously submitted to the Government.

The National Courts Administration is part of the group of agencies upon which the Government will focus with regard to agency management relating to issues of human rights.

6.4 Training material on human rights

Training material on human rights

Measure 122: The Government intends to commission the Forum for Living History, starting in 2007, to continuously update the survey of training material on human rights.

In its appropriation directions for 2005 the Government has given the Forum for Living History a commission relating to training material on human rights for use in the education system. Part of the assignment involves producing a survey of existing training material on human rights, pinpointing the areas in need of supplementary material and coordinating the work of producing new training material for the education system in the areas where a need has been perceived. The assignment also involves compiling and making available existing material. Within the framework of the assignment the Forum for Living History has collaborated with universities, colleges, schools, private organisations and other relevant players. The assignment is to be reported in connection with the annual report.

Starting in 2006 the Forum for Living History will disseminate the material from the mapping to selected target groups within the education sector. During 2006 supplementary training material will also be produced and disseminated in collaboration with the organisations involved. The project is expected to be completed in June 2007. The Forum for Living History will work on this assignment with the Swedish NGO Foundation for Human Rights and will consult with, among others, the National Agency for School Improvement.

It is essential that the survey of training material on human rights which the Forum for Living History has carried out be kept updated and made available to the rest of the community. The Government intends therefore to commission the Forum for Living History, starting in 2007, to continuously update the survey. Within the framework of this task the Forum for Living History should collaborate with other organisations commissioned to act in the field of human rights.

6.5 Dialogue on human rights

Dialogue with elected representatives

Measure 123: The Government intends during the period 2006–2009 to invite elected representatives at national and municipal level to take part in dialogue relating to respect for human rights in Sweden.

Elected representatives have an extremely important role in the promotion of human rights. During the work on this action plan a large

number of representatives from the reference groups stressed the importance of the role of Riksdag (Parliament) members and municipal politicians. The evaluation of the first action plan for human rights also emphasised the role of the Riksdag.

The Government believes for several reasons that it is imperative to initiate dialogue on human rights with elected representatives at both national and municipal level. It is, among others, the elected representatives who have to ensure through their decisions that human rights are respected. The elected representatives also constitute important channels between different parts and levels within the social organisation and they can thereby help to spread the discussion on human rights.

The Government therefore intends regularly to invite elected representatives at national and municipal level to take part in dialogue on respect for human rights in Sweden.

Global responsibility

Measure 124: Through the initiative Swedish Partnership for Global Responsibility the Government is promoting a continuous dialogue with the social partners and NGOs on issues relating to human rights, working conditions, environment and the fight against corruption. The Government intends to continue this dialogue during the period 2006–2009.

Through the initiative Swedish Partnership for Global Responsibility there is a continuous dialogue with the social partners and private organisations on issues relating to human rights, working conditions, environment and the fight against corruption. The initiative was launched by the Prime Minister in 2002 to stimulate the business sector to work to promote a sustainable global development through increased social and environmental responsibility (Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR). The starting-point is the OECD guidelines for multinational companies and the principles in the UN Global Compact. The three overall objectives of Global Responsibility are to help promote human rights and a fair and sustainable global development, to strengthen Swedish companies' competitiveness and to increase both the understanding and the observance of the multilateral regulations.

Global Responsibility aims during the period 2006–2009 to work *internally* to ensure that the Government Offices and relevant agencies have a good understanding of CSR and how they in their work and within their areas can help to create the conditions for social and environmental assumption of responsibility, especially in the area of human rights. The state should set an example in the sphere of social and environmental assumption of responsibility. In concrete terms this can be achieved by, for example, increasingly adopting a social perspective which includes human rights in public procurement and state ownership policy where this is possible. Global Responsibility therefore aims to intensify information and training measures in the area and to investigate the opportunities for embracing issues relating to human rights and social responsibility in public purchasing.

Externally Global Responsibility aims, among other things, to stimulate the exchange of knowledge and experience among companies, trade unions and NGOs with regard to such things as human rights and working conditions in connection with companies' international activities. Global Responsibility will arrange, both independently and in collaboration with other interested parties, seminars, conferences, round-table discussions, training projects and meetings in Sweden to stimulate discussion on what social and environmental responsibility might mean in practice.

Global Responsibility will also take these issues and the practical work out into the field during this period in collaboration with foreign agencies and interested parties on site. The Government's promotion policy plays an important role here. The Government will also work actively via Global Responsibility with policy development within the UN Global Compact and the collaboration within the international standardisation organisation (ISO) to produce a guiding standard for social responsibility. The ISO work started in 2004 and will run for at least three years.

Human rights are also a prioritised part of the promotion of the OECD guidelines through the work carried out in what is known as the Swedish national contact point for the OECD guidelines for multinational companies. All OECD countries have national contact points which should work to ensure that the OECD guidelines for multinational companies are observed. In Sweden the national contact point belongs to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and consists of representatives from several ministries, trade and industry and trade union organisations.

European youth campaign on human rights and non-discrimination

<p>Measure 125: The Government aims during 2006 and 2007 to carry out the Council of Europe's campaign "<i>All Different All Equal</i>", the purpose of which is to increase understanding among young people of human rights and issues of non-discrimination.</p>
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The rights perspective, together with the resources perspective, the independence perspective and the diversity perspective, lays the basis for the youth policy's two overall objectives: Young people should have real access to welfare and they should have real access to power. Young people should also have the same right to good living conditions as other citizens. Good living conditions means that young people's human rights should be protected and promoted and young people should be guaranteed social and economic security, good health and development opportunities. Not least it includes the right to participate in the community and to have an influence over one's own life, one's immediate environment and social development as a whole. This is what is meant by the rights perspective in the national youth policy. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child represents an important starting-point for all public activity which affects children and young people under the age of 18 and thus also for the national youth policy.

The Council of Europe's member states decided in 2005 to launch the campaign *All Different All Equal*. Within the framework of this campaign activities should be carried out with the purpose of increasing understanding among young people of human rights and issues of non-discrimination. The campaign, which is to be carried out during 2006 and 2007, will involve activities at both national and international level. The Government intends to give the delegation for human rights that is to be set up the task of coordinating and operating as a contact point for the players involved in the implementation of the campaign in Sweden.

Dialogue with the religious community

Measure 126: The Government has commissioned the Swedish Commission for State Grants to Religious Communities to deepen the dialogue with the religious community over society's basic values. Details of this task are to be reported in December 2006.

The Swedish Commission for State Grants to Religious Communities (SST) has extensive and regular contacts with various members of the religious community, organisations and with other government agencies. In 2002 SST was commissioned by the Government to deepen the dialogue with the religious community over issues relating to women's rights and the rights of the child. In the final report from December 2003 SST writes that it is essential that SST continue to be allowed to work on the task of deepening the dialogue over these matters and that the continuing work can only in certain parts be carried out within the framework of SST's budget.

The Government has given SST the task of continuing its dialogue with the religious community over society's basic values and of expanding this dialogue to include other members of the religious community than those previously spoken to. Details of this task are to be reported by 31 December 2006 at the latest.

See also: Measures 112 and 133.

6.6 Language and information issues

Introduction

It was suggested in the evaluation of the first national action plan for human rights that the next action plan should include a broader strategy on language and human rights with braille and sign language included. The evaluator emphasised the importance of language as a tool with which the individual might be able to assert his/her rights and take part in the public debate. Issues of information on human rights and the Government's website on human rights, www.humanrights.gov.se, are also dealt with in the evaluation. A number of representatives from the reference groups have also highlighted issues of language and information with respect to human rights.

This section deals with several measures connected with language and information on human rights. Issues relating to mother-tongue teaching in national minority languages and expansion of the Sami and Finnish administration area are, however, dealt with in the section on national minorities. Issues relating to pre-school school children with mother tongues other than Swedish are dealt with in the section on the right to education.

New organisation for guidance on the use of Swedish

Measure 127: From 1 July 2006 the current, central, state-financed organisation responsible for providing guidance on the use of Swedish will be strengthened, coordinated and incorporated in the agency the Institute for Dialectology, Onomastics and Folklore Research in order to make space for increased initiatives relating to the Swedish language, national minority languages, Swedish sign language etc. The responsibility for the Sami language work will, however, remain with the Sami Parliament.

The language situation in Sweden has changed in many different ways. Five languages, Sami, Finnish, Meänkieli, Romany Chib and Yiddish, are listed as national minority languages. In Sweden there are well over a million people with a foreign background and for many of them Swedish is a second language. Swedish sign language is an important part of deaf culture and is the mother tongue for around 10 000 people who have been deaf from birth. It is also used by an equal number of people with hearing impairments. In addition to this, the use of English is increasing in more and more areas. The Government believes that there needs to be an overall Swedish language policy to promote the Swedish language so that all people in Sweden are given the opportunity to acquire it and so that sign-language practitioners and Sweden's recognised national minorities have the opportunity to use and develop their languages.

The bill entitled *Bästa språket – en samlad svensk språkpolitik* (The best language – an overall Swedish language policy, prop. 2005/06:2), which was agreed by the Riksdag (Parliament) in December 2005, included a proposal for national language policy objectives. These state that everyone has a right to language, and this includes developing and using one's mother tongue. To achieve the objectives of the language policy, guidance on the use of Swedish needs to be coordinated and strengthened. The current, central, state-financed organisation responsible for providing guidance on the use of Swedish will therefore be strengthened, coordinated and incorporated in the agency the Institute for Dialectology, Onomastics and Folklore Research (SOFI) in order to make space for increased initiatives relating to the Swedish language, national minority languages, Swedish sign language etc. In December 2005, SOFI was instructed by the Government to incorporate the organisation responsible for language guidance into its operation from 1 July 2006. The responsibility for the Sami language work will, however, remain with the Sami Parliament.

The position of Swedish sign language

Measure 128: The inquiry into the position of sign language will report its conclusions by April 2006 at the latest. The Government intends thereafter to consider which measures are to be taken on the basis of the proposals put forward by the inquiry.

Swedish sign language is an important part of deaf culture and is the mother tongue for around 10 000 people in Sweden who have been deaf from birth or early childhood. There is also an equally large group of children and adults with hearing impairments who use sign language. For these people the opportunity to make themselves understood in sign language is a basic prerequisite for participation. There are also persons with hearing who, due to disabilities, are unable to assimilate the spoken or written language and who are therefore dependent on sign language for their communication.

An investigator is currently reviewing the position of sign language (ToR 2003:169). The assignment involves carrying out a review of the right to use sign language and the opportunities for using it in different situations, e.g. in working life and with social support. The inquiry will also map the conditions for equal education in sign language and the opportunities to provide deaf immigrants with training in Swedish sign language. The assignment also includes a study of how opportunities have improved for elected representatives who are dependent on sign language for their communication in order to be able to handle their business tasks in the same way as other elected representatives.

A report of the assignment should be completed by April 2006 at the latest. The Government intends thereafter to consider which measures are to be taken on the basis of the proposals put forward by the inquiry. This action plan for human rights also includes several proposals, e.g. in the area of discrimination, which involves persons with disabilities and also deaf and other people who are dependent on sign language for their communication.

Information and knowledge on human rights for the general public

Measure 129: The Government intends to give the delegation for human rights that is to be set up the task during the period 2006–2009 of spreading information and knowledge of human rights to groups among the general public who at present do not receive sufficient amounts of such information and knowledge.

The task of implementing the first national action plan for human rights has shown that there is a need for a basic review of questions on how information on human rights can reach different groups among the general public. The individual needs to be aware of and to have basic knowledge of his or her human rights in order to be able to monitor and safeguard them. Experiences gained by the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination also show that there are groups in Swedish society who feel great mistrust towards the public administration and who therefore rarely make contact with agencies over issues relating to their rights. For

information on human rights to reach groups whose rights have been abused or are at risk of being abused it may therefore be necessary to use so-called integrated communication, i.e. an active, focused operation.

The delegation for human rights that is to be set up (see Measure 103) is therefore given the task of surveying how different types of information and knowledge of human rights are spread today. On the basis of the mapping, the delegation should analyse which groups among the general public do not receive sufficient information and knowledge of this kind. The delegation will also be given the task of spreading information and knowledge on the subject of human rights in accordance with the analysis that has been carried out. The delegation should take particular care to ensure that information on human rights is available in different languages, including the national minority languages and Swedish sign language, and that it is available to people with disabilities.

Measures for developing the Government's website on human rights

Measure 130: The Government intends during 2006 and 2007 to adapt the Government's website on human rights for people with disabilities and to have sections of the website translated into different languages, including the national minority languages. The Government also intends to develop special pages for different user groups, e.g. agencies.

As part of the implementation of the first national action plan for human rights the Government's website on human rights, www.humanrights.gov.se, was set up. The evaluator of the first action plan has recommended further investment in this website. The evaluator also stressed the importance of language, in a broad sense, to enable the individual to know and demand his or her rights. The representatives from the reference groups have also highlighted the importance of language in this context.

The Government shares the view that it is essential that information on human rights, including that which is spread via the Government's own website, be more adapted for persons with disabilities and made available in different languages, including sign language and the national minority languages. The Government intends to further adapt parts of the website for special groups of users, e.g. agencies, municipalities and county councils, in order to make the website a practical tool in their work of promoting human rights within the framework of their own activity.

Translation and dissemination of international documents on human rights

Measure 131: The Government intends during 2006–2009 to intensify its work of spreading documents relating to Sweden's observance of international agreements on human rights and will continue to have certain documents of this nature translated into Swedish.

In accordance with the first action plan, the Government arranged during the period 2002–2004 to have conclusions about Sweden's observance of

conventions on human rights from the UN's and certain of the Council of Europe's supervisory committees translated into Swedish. These documents have been set out on the Government's website on human rights, www.humanrights.gov.se. This website also contains summaries of judgements made by the European Court against Sweden that have acquired legal force. Memoranda with the judgements attached are sent to the agencies concerned. Certain other documents on human rights that have been of particular interest to other agencies have also been translated.

However, during the reference meetings that were held in the course of the work on the action plan, it has been observed that documents from international bodies concerning Sweden's observance of international agreements on human rights continue to receive insufficient dissemination.

The Government intends during 2006–2009 to intensify its work of spreading knowledge of documents from international bodies relating to Sweden's observance of international agreements on human rights. Such documents will also continue to be translated into Swedish.

The Government will also, when the need arises, have other documents on human rights translated into Swedish if these are deemed to be of special interest to the agencies.

It should also be mentioned in this context that recommendations have been adopted within the Council of Europe concerning, among other things, the publication and dissemination of the text of the European Convention on Human Rights and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights in the member states.

7 Monitoring and evaluation

Follow-up of the action plan

Measure 132: The Government intends to instruct the inter-ministerial working group for human rights to monitor continuously the implementation of this action plan and to make a report on this follow-up at the latest by March 2010.

The action plan for human rights which has been summarised here covers the four-year period 2006–2009 and contains a number of measures. It is of the greatest importance that the work of implementing the action plan is regularly monitored. The inter-ministerial working group for human rights has the task of continuously monitoring the implementation of the various measures during the period of the action plan. It is therefore natural for the working group to be also given the task of following up the action plan and to report on this follow-up in connection when the period covered by the action plan comes to an end in 2009. This report should be submitted by March 2010 at the latest. Should any measure in the action plan not have been implemented, the reasons for this should be presented in the memorandum as far as possible.

Half-way seminar on the implementation of the action plan

Measure 133: The Government intends to invite the reference groups to a half-way seminar in spring 2008 to check and discuss the implementation of this action plan.

This action plan has been prepared through an extensive process of consultation in various parts of society. The reference groups that have participated in the work of producing the survey and the action plan have put forward a number of points of view and proposals which have had a great influence on the content of the document. It is important to continuously follow up the implementation of the measures announced in the action plan and to maintain the dialogue with the reference groups that have participated in the work. Furthermore, it is conceivable that changed conditions in society create a need to change focus in the work of implementation or that problems not taken up in the action plan need to be discussed with the reference groups.

For these reasons, the Government will invite the reference groups during spring 2008 to a half-way seminar where the state of progress as regards implementation of the action plan will be reported on and discussed.

Evaluation of the Action Plan

Measure 134: The Government intends to have an evaluation made of the action plan at the latest by spring 2010.

The first national action plan for human rights was evaluated by the then secretary-general for the Olof Palme International Center, Thomas Hammarberg, who took up an appointment as the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights in April 2006. The evaluator's report has been published in Swedish on the Government website for human rights, www.humanrights.gov.se, and also sent to all reference groups, as well as to other interested parties. This task included making an evaluation of the implementation and results of the action plan and presenting conclusions and recommendations for the next action plan.

The results from this evaluation constituted very valuable material when producing the second national action plan for human rights. The Government considers also that an evaluation contributes to openness and confidence in the Government's work on human rights issues. The Government therefore intends to have an evaluation made of the implementation of this action plan. The work carried out by the delegation for human rights which is to be established should also be evaluated.

The next national action plan for human rights

Measure 135: The Government intends to start work on the third national action plan for human rights at the latest by spring 2010.

Work on the Government's long-term goal, achieving full respect for human rights, must be a continuous process. The development of the international system of rules on human rights as well as changes in society at the national level mean that new issues and problems arise and new measures need to be taken in order for Sweden's international human rights obligations to be fully respected.

The Government's assessment is that national action plans for human rights are an appropriate method to work with these issues. This method means that the situation for human rights is regularly reviewed and a coordinated approach taken to human rights at the national level. Furthermore, the work on every action plan is a process of consultation with broad sectors of the community, which contributes to increased awareness, knowledge, openness and discussion about human rights issues.

For these reasons, the Government intends to start work on a further action plan at the latest by spring 2010, in parallel with the evaluation of the present action plan. During the period that the new action plan is being produced, the Government will continue the work for human rights based on this action plan.

Annex 1 – Recommendations from the evaluation of the first action plan

Excerpt from “*Bra början, men bara en början*” (A good beginning, but only a beginning”, Comments on and evaluation of the national action plan for human rights, in Swedish), Ministry of Justice (dnr Ju2004/6673/D)

Thomas Hammarberg, January 2005

Our task included making recommendations for future work with the next action plan. The following pages contain a summary of the conclusions we have previously presented as a number of recommendations. Our recommendations are largely based on the points of view received from the actors we have contacted in the course of the evaluation work.

1. The ambition to prepare an action plan for human rights and present the Government’s priorities openly is valuable and appreciated. The work on the plan has led to increased awareness among those directly concerned at the Government Offices and established a foundation for better coordination between departments and ministries. This in itself is an argument in favour of continuing to produce time-limited action plans for human rights.

2. The very existence of an action plan for human rights is also perceived as a signal that this area is given priority in the Government’s policies. It underlines that the Government does not regard human rights issues as solely foreign policy problems and serves as an admission that these rights also need to be protected in our own country. In order for work with the coming action plan to be meaningful and produce results, there must be room for human rights in the political process and funds must be provided to comply with the objectives. This is a matter of credibility. In the case of human rights, there must not be a gap between words and actions.

3. A clear official indication is needed – in the declaration of government policy or in another context – that the treaties for human rights ratified by Sweden will have a binding impact on the exercise of authority and justice in Sweden.

4. It was positive and appreciated that the Government Offices consulted on a broad basis and in detail with many stakeholders during the actual planning process. It is anticipated that there will be a similar active open approach next time. We also recommend closer contact with the Swedish Parliament, the Riksdag, during the planning phase.

5. The next plan should be more concrete, more action-oriented and clearer as regards deadlines and reporting. The national action plan for