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OPEN LETTER

**To: Nordic Council of Ministers
Nordic Parliament Members**

Copy: United Nations Human Rights Watch
Council of Europe
Media

May 23, 2018

Subject: Formal complaint about Human Rights Violations and Parliament Responsibilities

On behalf of the largest Nordic children and father organizations we hereby request and urge in all respect that the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic Parliaments address the issue of gender equality in family law and practice for children and fathers.

It is a clear experience talking to many thousands of parents every year in the Nordic region that children and parents for historical reasons are still living with single parenting laws in a shared parenting world.

We no longer in the Nordic region can state, who is the best student, manager, prime minister - or parent - based on gender and the reality and children research today documents in the Nordic region, that shared parenting is in the best interest of the child. This as well as creating equal opportunities for women and men, boys and girls.

We as organizations experience that children and fathers as well as shared parents in general are clearly discriminated in the family law. For example, only one parent often receive public and free digitalized information about the child, the child does not have the same legal right for parental leave with both parents, children and fathers has not always a legal right to respect of biological fatherhood in life. The use of single residence and welfare benefits based on one parent instead of shared parenting as the norm in the family law is also in today's Nordic society a clear violation of basic human rights.

We witness on a daily basis, clear violations of especially the United Nations Children Convention article 2, 7 and the European Human Rights Convention articles 8, 14 and 17.

UN Children Convention:

*Article 2: States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, **sex**, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or **other status**. 2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.*

*Article 7: The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, **the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents**.*

European Human Rights Convention

Article 8 Right to respect for private and family life:

*1. **Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life**, his home and his correspondence. 2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.*

Article 14 Prohibition of discrimination:

*The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without **discrimination on any ground such as sex**, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or **other status**.*

Article 17 Prohibition of abuse of rights:

***Nothing in this Convention may be interpreted** as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or perform any act aimed **at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein** or at their limitation to a greater extent than is provided for in the Convention.*

We therefore urge the Nordic Council of Ministers and the National Parliaments to secure shared parenting family laws as the norm in line with the Nordic society today and basic human rights for all citizens.

Please as inspiration find attached the first Nordic gender equality catalog for children and fathers with 348 items in 12 themes.

The catalogue was, presented at the New Nordic Fathers conference in the Danish Parliament on November 20, 2017 with all the Nordic children and father organizations being present.

Please also find attached the UN Examination report 2015 submitted by the Danish Fathers Association on the examination of human rights in Denmark for children and fathers.

All the Nordic children and father organizations is available for positive collaboration, meetings and knowledge required to secure this important issue for children's health, public health, gender equality and the protection of basic human rights for all Nordic citizens.

UN Convention for Children (articles 2, 7):

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

The European Human Rights Convention (article 8, 14 and 17)

https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf

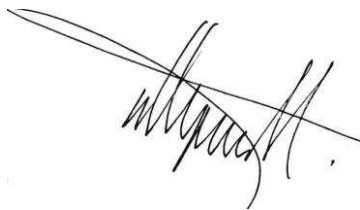
The Council of Europe Resolution 2079 (2015)

<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-EN.asp?fileid=22220&lang=en>

VIDEO: The first gender equality catalog for children and fathers (Danish only)

<http://foreningenfar.dk/ligestillingskatalog-2017>

The Nordic countries, May 2018



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