

1/24/2023

## Nordic stocktaking; SRHR under pressure, February 23-24, 2023

### Background

The Nordic countries share a strong commitment to protect and promote sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) as an integral part of gender equality. It allows women and girls to make their own choices about their bodies and how they live their lives. However, years of hard-fought gains are now under increasing threat by anti-rights movements. We are experiencing increasing pressure on basic human rights, especially aimed at women and sexual minorities in several European countries. The right to safe and legal abortion is being rolled back in several countries, and access to contraception and comprehensive sexuality education is being challenged. Massive funds for the anti-rights movement are pouring into all regions, with pressure on Europe in recent years. This also includes the Nordic countries, where we, in different national constellations, see an increased toxic public rhetoric towards LGBT+ rights, diverse family structures, as well as other gender and identity issues. There is therefore an urgent need for further political commitment and coordination to counter this worrying trend, which we know is well coordinated, funded, and professionalized.

In 2021, the European Parliamentary Forum published the report [Tip of the Iceberg](#), which demonstrated how the opposition to gender and SRHR has grown significantly across countries in Europe. The rapport showed that over the past 10 years, funding for gender-opposition movements, associations and political parties has more than quadrupled.<sup>1</sup>

The Nordic countries have a unique opportunity and responsibility to lead the work to advance and secure fundamental rights. There is a political momentum to bring together allies, national and European parliamentarians, civil servants, and civil society to confront and mobilize against the anti-gender movements, both inside and outside the EU. Nordic members of the EU parliament are known for their engagement in promoting fundamental rights in Europe. Despite this, there is an unfulfilled – and much needed – space to create a CSO/parliamentary alliance to coordinate and support this engagement between likeminded actors. This event will be an

important step towards strengthening the Nordic parliamentary coordination, but also ensuring that Nordic members of the European Parliament and other relevant allies are involved in dialogue and co-operation. Hence, the event will gather Nordic national parliamentarians, members of the European Parliament, as well as relevant civil servants and civil society both from in and outside Europe. They will convene for a day of discussions and knowledge sharing on the growing anti-gender trends, including identifying opportunities for coordination and alliance creation across sectors.

#### Target groups

Nordic parliamentarians, in particular members of all party parliamentarian groups on sexual and reproductive health and rights, Nordic members of the European Parliament, relevant Nordic ministries working on SRHR and gender equality, relevant actors from in and outside Europe, working on SRHR/GE.

The event is closed and by-invitation-only.

#### Dates and venue

23-24 February 2023 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The seminar takes place on 23 February at the Danish Parliament, Christiansborg. The 24<sup>th</sup> will include an extended Nordic APPG coordination meeting with both MPs and MEPs as well as a strategic meeting with the Nordic Council of Ministers (details tbc)

#### Expected outcome of the event

- To take the first steps towards establishment a Nordic APPG/MEP/CSO platform to promote SRHR and counter the setback in terms of SRHR and other fundamental rights, in cooperation with key allies, including the Nordic relevant ministries, European Parliamentary Forum and UNFPA. The platform could include themed information sharing, briefings/trainings, cross-sector coordination, support for Nordic MP/MEP engagement and promotion of support in response to the rising anti-rights trends in Europe and globally.
- To plan towards broader European initiative on pushing back the push-back.
- A joint statement/op-ed on the Nordic countries commitment to counter the anti-gender movements in the Nordics and Europe alike and to promote the respect for every person's right to make decisions over their own body.

*The event is planned by Sex & Samfund (DK), Sex & Politikk (Norway), RFSU (Sweden), Väestöliitto (Finland), and hosted by the Danish Parliament's cross-party network for Sexual and reproductive Health and Rights*

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