

## *First call for papers*

# **”Four or more languages for all: Language policy challenges of the future” Conference on multilingualism in the Nordic countries 22-24 August 2011 The Nordic House, Tórshavn, the Faroe Islands**

The conference “*Four or more languages for all: Language policy challenges of the future*” will be held on 22-24 August 2011 in the Nordic House in Tórshavn, the Faroe Islands. Conference organiser is ”Granskingardepilin fyri Samfelagsmenning” (Research Center for Social Development), [www.socdev.fo](http://www.socdev.fo), the University of the Faroe Islands, [www.setur.fo](http://www.setur.fo)

The main aims of the conference are:

To provide an interdisciplinary forum by bringing together scholars and practitioners from diverse disciplines such as sociolinguistics, sociology, history, linguistics, literature studies, political science and law

To compare Nordic experiences in the field

To draw attention to and focus on language policy experiences and particular challenges in the self-governing areas

To draw attention to and focus on immigrants’ diverse situations and language rights

The conference is based on a **broad understanding of multilingualism and language policy**:

**The distribution of focus between individual and societal multilingualism.** In principle, there is consensus in Europe and in the Nordic countries today about the desirability and importance of multilingualism both for individuals and society as a whole. With regard to language policy a central issue may be either the individual’s situation and possibilities for development or ensuring economic progress for society or other societal goals. *How do the Nordic countries and autonomous areas look upon this (potential) tension?*

**The importance of all citizens’ multilingualism.** One goal of the conference is to explore the possibilities that majorities have in order to become multilingual and whether they are aware of the privileges they have when they may use their own language in most situations. Likewise, it is at least equally important that all linguistic minorities (including indigenous peoples, immigrant minorities and sign language users) have a real chance to become multilingual at a high level. *What status does multilingualism have in present language policy strategies in the Nordic countries?*

**Threat in relation to all Nordic languages.** Another goal of the conference is to compare situations where ”small” national languages such as Danish and Finnish may be threatened by English in some domains and situations, and situations where indigenous and minority languages are seriously threatened by both national languages and English.

**Different perceptions of language policy documents in different Nordic countries.** In spite of a long history and traditions of language cooperation, and in spite of the fact that the Nordic countries are signatories of partly the same Nordic and international language policy documents, they have often very different perceptions of their obligations in relation to these recommendations and to conventions about language rights.

**The difference between accepted national, Nordic and international language policy obligations and their implementation.** Some minorities (the Finland Swedes) and indigenous people (North Samis) in the Nordic countries have language policy conditions that are better than most of those that apply to similar linguistic groups around the world. For other minorities (Romanis) the conditions are not much better than in other countries. Researchers from other countries often think that the small Nordic welfare states are very homogeneous, also regarding their treatment of linguistic minorities, but the existing variation opens up the prospect of making diverse types of international comparisons – these include African and Asian countries in which educational experiments are undertaken, which in terms of research are more sophisticated than similar European and North American experiments.

**Conference languages:** Danish, Norwegian and Swedish as well as English. Presentations may be given in any of these four languages, plus in Faroese. Abstracts are to be written in both a Scandinavian language and in English. There is no interpretation service at the conference.

**Keynote speakers are:**

**Dr. Carol Benson**, Centre for Teaching and Learning, Stockholm University

**Prof. Anne Holmen**, Institute of Pedagogy, the Danish School of Education, Aarhus University

**Prof. emeritus Robert Phillipson**, Copenhagen Business School

**Prof. Markku Suksi**, Department of Law, Åbo Akademi University

**Papers** (20 minutes, plus 10 minutes for discussion) are invited in relation to the goals of the conference and the following themes:

**The main theme of the conference** is "Four or more languages for all: Language policy challenges of the future". For many indigenous peoples and minorities it is necessary to know at least three or four languages: their own language, the official state language and one or more international languages. A high level of multilingualism is an important resource entailing many advantages for both the individual and society at large, but educational systems are not often organised in such a way that it is possible for individuals to achieve high proficiency levels. Therefore, the conference aims at investigating what type of language policy (regarding education, law-making, social issues, politics, etc.) fulfills this goal in diverse circumstances. The conference focuses on the following sub-themes:

**Theme I – Language legislation:**

How far may legislation be pursued – may it go too far? (Legislation on monolingualism, ban on using a language at school or at work, in advertising, etc, ban on using individual letters or alphabet). Some of the questions that will be raised in this respect are: *What domains in the Nordic countries are covered by language legislation? To what extent is monolingualism as a societal model supported, or to what extent are both individual and societal multilingualism supported in existing legislation? In what way is a distinction made between the public and private sphere in the present legislation? What particular regulations regarding language apply in the educational system, in the media, in legislation on marketing, etc.?*

**Theme II - The autonomous areas:**

The Nordic region comprises three autonomous territories: the Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands where language consciousness is widespread. Therefore the following question is of current interest: *In what way do the autonomous areas position themselves in relation to present discussions and principles regarding multilingualism? In addition, we may ask: How is work on language policy conducted in the Sami regions, also in relation to revitalization and multilingualism?*

**Theme III - From problem, victim and threat perceptions towards a resource, agent and forward-pointing societal model based on individual and societal multilingualism:**

This subject area includes for example the following questions: *What kind of language policy changes focus from problem, victim and threat perceptions to forward-pointing multilingualism? What type of educational policy encourages multilingualism? What methods of teaching support multilingualism?*

**Theme IV – Panel debate:**

The questions that will be discussed in the plenary session will be specified later. The plan is that symposium participants, representatives from Faroese society and others interested are to be given the opportunity to ask members of the panel questions in advance which they are interested in discussing or getting further insight in. Participants in the panel are both keynote speakers and representatives from Faroese society.

**Publication.** The aim is to publish a book or a special issue of a journal with selected articles from the conference.

**Abstracts** are to be sent to: [malpolitikk@socdev.fo](mailto:malpolitikk@socdev.fo)

**Important conference deadlines:**

**15 January 2011**

Deadline for submission of **abstracts** (200-300 words)

## 28 February 2011

Information on **approval of abstracts**

## 15 March 2011

Final deadline for **preliminary registration** on [malpolitikk@setur.fo](mailto:malpolitikk@setur.fo). Please write an e-mail stating that you are interested in participating in the conference.

## 30 April 2011

Deadline for **binding registration**, which requires payment of conference fee.

### Conference dates:

22 August 2011, get-together in the evening • 23 and 24 August 2011, conference dates • 24 August 2011, conference dinner.

### Conference fee:

Until 15 April 2011 (date included), DKK 1400 / EUR 187 (students, unemployed and senior citizens DKK 1200 / EUR 160 ).

After 15 April 2011, DKK 1600 / EUR 215 (students, unemployed and senior citizens DKK 1400 / EUR 187).

Fee includes participation, refreshments and lunch during the conference as well as an end-of-conference dinner.

**Conference e-mail:** [malpolitikk@setur.fo](mailto:malpolitikk@setur.fo)

**Conference webpage** (under construction). From 1 September 2010: [www.socdev.fo/malpolitikk](http://www.socdev.fo/malpolitikk)

**Venue:** the Nordic House, Norðari ringvegur · FO-100 Tórshavn • Tlf. (+298) 351351 • Fax (+298) 351350 • E-mail: [nlh@nlh.fo](mailto:nlh@nlh.fo); webpage: <http://www.nlh.fo>.

**Information about the Faroe Islands:** <http://www.faroeislands.com/>. Information on travel by **air** to the Faroes: [www.atlantic.fo](http://www.atlantic.fo). Information on **seaways** travel to the Faroes: [www.smyril-line.dk](http://www.smyril-line.dk).

### Accommodation:

Please contact the hotel of your preference directly to make your own booking, mentioning the fact that you are a participant in the conference in question: **Hotel Føroyar** • Tel. (+298) 317500 • Fax (298) 317501 • E-mail: [hf@hotelforoyar.fo](mailto:hf@hotelforoyar.fo); [www.hotelforoyar.fo](http://www.hotelforoyar.fo). **Hotel Tórshavn** • Tel. (+298) 350000 • E-mail: [ht@hoteltorshavn.fo](mailto:ht@hoteltorshavn.fo); [www.hoteltorshavn.fo](http://www.hoteltorshavn.fo). **Hotel Hafnia** • Tlf. (+298) 313233 • Fax 315250 • E-mail: [hafnia@hafnia.fo](mailto:hafnia@hafnia.fo); [www.hafnia.fo](http://www.hafnia.fo). Rooms are offered at a negotiated **conference rate**. Accommodation at a hostel is also an option.

### Conference organisers:

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