



## Nordic Research Council for Criminology

### Protocol from the Nordic Research Council for Criminology (NSfK) Council Meeting

**Date:** 11-12 March 2024

**Times:** 1. pm. – 6.00 pm. & 9.am – 2.pm

**Venue:** Aalborg University, Copenhagen

**Present from the Council:** Hanna Rún Sverrisdóttir (IS), Linda Kjær Minke (DE) Kolbrún Benediktsdóttir\* (IS), Annick Ingrid Prieur (DK), Rannveig Þórisdóttir (IS) Anne-Julie Boesen Pedersen (DK), Minna Piispa (FI), Ragnhild Helene Hennem (NO) Helene Huhta (FI- via zoom), Heidi Mork Lomell (NO), Mikko Aaltonen (FI), Arnt Even Hustad (NO), Anna-Karin Ivert (SE), Tove Pettersson (SE), Erik Grevholm (SE)

Minute taker, Executive Secretary Per Jørgen Ystehede (NO).

\*present only day 1

#### *Opening of the meeting - Welcome and introduction*

Chair Heidi Mork Lomell welcomed the Council. Council Member Annick Prieur gave a welcome and introduction to the University of Aalborg. Council Member Kolbrún Benediktsdóttir informed the Council that she would be resigning due to moving to Hague as Iceland's representative at EUROJUST.

Quorum for the meeting and agenda was approved.

#### *News from the Ministries of Justice*

Representatives of the Ministries, Hanna Rún Sverrisdóttir (IS), Anne-Julie Boesen Pedersen (DK), Minna Piispa (FI), Minna Piispa (FI), Erik Grevholm (SE) and Arnt Even Hustad presented what the Nordic Ministries of Justice had focused on in 2023. Among the topics the Nordic Ministries especially had focused on in 2023 were: prisons and probation, youth crimes, young offenders, and new legal regulations on youth crimes, tightening of firearms legislation, increased penalties for criminal offences such as violent and sexual crimes, gang-related crime, strategies against violent extremism and terrorism and organised crime.

### *Annual report 2023 - Closing of Accounts 2023*

Annual report 2023 (appendix 1) was presented. Council Member Anne Julie Boesen noticed wrong contact seminar was listed on page 18. This will be corrected by the Secretariat. Otherwise, the Council found the annual report satisfactory.

The Executive Secretary presented the closing of the account for 2023, and the overspending on the following budget posts: research grants and research seminar. The main reason for the overspending of research grants was that previously, sums were paid out, divided into yearly sums. This practice led to financial unpredictability as projects were often delayed, and thus it became uncertain in which budget year costs would occur. From 2022, the secretariat decided to change this practice so that the entire sum granted by the Council is paid out in the same budget year the grant is handed out to the researchers host institution. This to cut bureaucracy and strengthen the Council's control of the budget. As of 2024, there are no longer any unpaid projects. One still has to consider some variation when it comes to budgeted costs and final accounts for the budget year. This is due to travel grants and working group grants. In cases where these projects are carried out late in the year, and since only actual direct documented costs are reimbursed here, some expenses may fall to the next budgetary year. The reason that the budget was exceeded when it comes to the research seminar is mainly due to i) an increase in the costs for travel and accommodation, ii) the great interest in the topic of 2023 [prisons] from the Nordic Ministries of Justice resulting in that 10 more people than originally budgeted for were invited to the seminar - and iii) that in recent years the previous rule about only paying for double rooms have been waived.

The Council had questions and wanted more documentation when it comes to the overspending on the Research seminar in 2023. Attached see invoice from Berg Hansen (travel agent) which lists all expenses. The Council also wanted to know more about the reasons for underspending on both working groups and travel grants. The Executive Secretary has found out that this was because costs for working groups and contacts meeting had been issued on the wrong post, on research grants instead of working groups and travel grants.

### *Financials 2024 - Budget proposal 2024 - Proposal for state grants 2025- Payments to the Chair of NSfK 2024*

The Chair presented the proposed budget for 2024, and the Council did not have any initial comments, besides to look into increasing the rates and total sum allocated for travel grants.

The Chair presented the suggestion for state grants 2025 which for the first time since 2021 will be index regulated. The Council approved of the suggested index regulations – but

wanted more information in the letter to the Ministries describing the reasoning and pre-history for not index regulating the state grants between 2022- 2024.

The Chair left the meeting while vice-chair Rannveig Þórisdóttir led the meeting. Payments, identical to reimbursement given in 2022 and 2023, were unanimously approved.

#### *Applications for research grants and working groups/contact seminars*

The Chair presented this year's top-ranking applications, and the Council discussed the question of cases of conflict of interest. Council Member Linda Kjær Minke, Council Member Tove Pettersson and Council Member Annick Prieur left the meeting during the discussion on whether to fund a joint Nordic project. The Council decided to support the following joint Nordic project: *Sentiments on justice in the Nordic countries* headed by PI Klara Hermansson (SE).

The Council reconvened and decided to support Thomas Friis Søgaard; *Drug WholeSaling Careers* for an individual project. When it came to funding a second individual project, the council deliberated and during part of the discussion, Council Member Mikko Aaltonen left the meeting due to conflict of interest. The Council decided to support the project headed by PI Suvi Virtanen, *The effects of social policies in reducing criminality in Nordic countries* (SE).

The Council decided to support the following 4 working group applications:

- *The Nordic Biopsychosocial Criminology Network* (Amber Beckley SE)
- *Restorative Justice in the Nordic Countries* (Aino Jauhiainen FI)
- *Responses to Hate Crime in the Nordics* (Rune Ellefsen NO)
- *Nordic Research Network on Prevention of Child Sexual Offending* (Kasper Jørgensen DE).

(The meeting on day one was adjourned at 17:30 pm, and reconvened day two at 9.am.)

#### *Research support – Discussion- Evaluation of the process*

The Council approved of the Call for Research Grants 2024 with two minor revisions – one regarding phrasing about advisory boards in joint Nordic projects, the second concerning date for announcing the call. The new date is October 1<sup>st</sup> 2024.

The Council was satisfied with the process, however had the following suggested improvements: i) the Secretariat develops a memo that in more detail describes the process. The Council also suggested simplifying the working group application templates. Finally, that the Secretariat should investigate the potential for improving the interface on the Aspicore application portal. The Council also decided that the Secretariat should develop a

memo on guidelines for considering conflict of interest (COI) as the traditions on how to deal with potential COI dilemmas differ between the Nordic countries.

#### *Future organisation of NSfK*

The Council, after deliberating the alternatives, decided that the Secretariat shall be moved to Iceland in December 2024, and it will be the Icelandic Chair and the new Council that will continue the work on reforming the secretarial functions of NSfK.

#### *Policy Briefs and Policy recommendations*

The Council decided the following: in cases where funded projects had not produced any publications, the policy brief would either be published following the 1<sup>st</sup> publication or in the format of a Working paper for future policy brief recommendations. This should include information on the intent and limitations of the brief.

#### *Revision of Guidelines*

The Council had the following comments regarding revisions of guidelines: to keep overhead for administrating working groups (§4), deleting §3, final bullet point, delete entire §5 d. Otherwise the Council supported edit of guidelines suggested by the Chair and the Secretariat.

#### *Contact seminars and Working group meetings - Suggestions re Contact seminars and Working groups 2024*

Council Member Anne-Julie Boesen Pedersen gave a report from the contact seminar on Nordic crime victimization surveys. These are currently not comparable on a Nordic level. The Council expressed an interest in further developing a methodological paper on the current challenges of comparing victimization studies in the Nordic countries.

Concerning contact seminar for 2024, Council members Linda Kjær Minke and Mikko Aaltonen suggested arranging one on the aging prison population in the Nordic countries.

#### *NSfK Research Seminar 2024*

The Swedish representatives presented the preliminary program. It was decided not to include a social event. The mini-council meeting will be held on Tuesday the 14<sup>th</sup> of May in the afternoon.

*Nordic Journal of Criminology & Nordisk Tidsskrift for Kriminalvidenskab*

The Chair presented the annual reports, and these were discussed. The Chair informed the Council that the editors of Nordic Journal of Criminology had agreed to extend their contract for another two years. The Council Members are encouraged to continue promoting the journals to their colleagues.

*Scandinavian Studies in Criminology – Digitization and Open Access*

The Council decided in favor of digitalizing Scandinavian Studies in Criminology as suggested by the Chair. Cost alternative 2 offered by Scandinavian University Press was selected.

*Budget approval 2024 - State grants 2025*

The Council approved the budget for 2024 with the following revisions: increasing the rates and the sum of travel grants (from 8200 to 10 000, and 16 400 to 20 000 NOK) as well as the allocated sum from 100 000 to 150 000 NOK. Research grants 2 750 000, WG 400 000, WG (Council) 100 000.

The Council approved the suggested state grant for 2025.

*Council Meeting 2025*

The Council decided on the following dates: 13-14 March 2025.

*AOB (Any other business)*

The Chair thanked Council Member Ragnhild Hennum (NO) for her long and valuable service to NSfK. Hennum has been a member of the Council since 2006.